

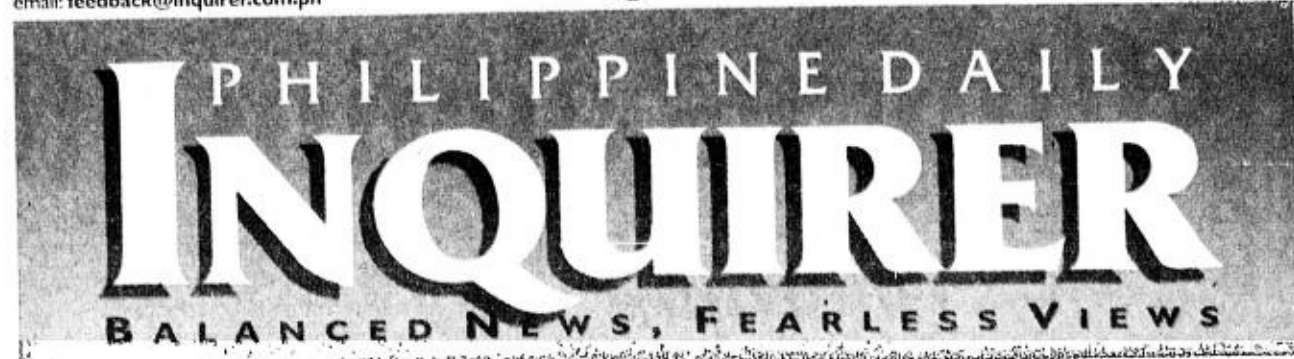
Proficiency of high school seniors in Filipino declines

By Alcuin Papa

THE PROFICIENCY OF FOURTH YEAR HIGH school students in Filipino, the national language, has declined significantly over the past few years, according to the Department of Education. Results of the National Achievement Test (NAT) last year showed that students scored 42.48 percent in Filipino, down by almost 20 percentage points from 61.26 percent in 2001.

PROFICIENCY / A14

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★★

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PACQUIAO / A14

Pacquiao et al. delay flight; airline staff irked

By Nikko Dizon

FILIPINO BOXING CHAMPION MANNY PACQUIAO earned the ire of Philippine Airlines staff yesterday after he held up a PAL flight to Hong Kong and did not appear to be the least bit apologetic about it. He was also a no-show for the preliminary investigation yesterday of a case brought against him by a former lover seeking support for a 2-year-old boy he had reportedly fathered. In-

Malacañang open to talks with military rebs, but ...

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Philip C. Tubeza and Christian V. Esguerra

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY SAID it was ready to discuss with soldiers the "underlying causes" of military restiveness, but it would not agree to the meeting being turned into a propaganda forum. The Palace statement coincided with renewed calls from two Roman Catholic bishops and a leading senator for the administration to reveal or help uncover the truth behind the unresolved "Hello Garci" tape scandal.

"There seems to be no sincere action on the part of the executive to search for the truth," Borongan Bishop Leonardo Medroso said in a telephone interview.

A military group that threatened to withdraw its support of President Macapagal-Arroyo had indicated it was prepared to meet with her but that the issue of the alleged involvement of some generals in probable fraud in the 2004 presidential election must be on the agenda.

"The dialogue agenda is open for all relevant and vital issues affecting the Armed Forces. All voices within the chain of command will be heard but the discussion must not be used as a vehicle for propaganda," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

Malacañang has repeatedly said that Ms Arroyo won the election fairly and that claims she cheated were propaganda by her political foes.

In a phone interview, Bunye refused to say categorically if Ms Arroyo would agree to discuss poll fraud in talks with the military on issues dividing the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

"We don't want to go into specifics just yet," Bunye said. "All I can say is that we're open to dialogue and we don't want to reject any specific issue at this point."

"We don't want the forum to be used for grandstanding or espousing their causes," he added.

In a prepared statement, Bunye said, "It is important to know the underlying causes and reasons that drive our soldiers to meddle in politics."

"We hope that these would finally clear up the issues that have been muddled by destabilizers and coup plotters and infuse

MALACAÑANG / A6

GMA opponents shift battle to SC

Gov't argues petitions against 1017 already moot



CONGRESSWOMEN, together with party-list Representatives Joel Virador and Teddy Casiño, celebrate the start of Women's Month in Congress by releasing doves to dramatize their protest against the arrest orders issued against five of their colleagues for rebellion. JOAN BONDOCO

By Armand Nocum, TJ Burgonio and Christine O. Avendaño

GOVERNMENT LAWYERS yesterday told the Supreme Court that President Macapagal-Arroyo's lifting of her proclamation of a state of national emergency had made petitions challenging its constitutionality moot and academic and should be dismissed.

But court spokesperson Ismael Khan said the magistrates would hear today as scheduled oral arguments on the petitions.

"The hearing will be conducted ... because of the transcendental importance of the issues involved," Khan said.

"There is authority for the view that the court will decide the question even if it has been rendered moot."

Senate President Franklin Drilon warned the magistrates that the threat to press freedom remained and that five lawmakers were practically under detention in the House of Representatives, where they had sought protection.

"I urge the Supreme Court to decide on the petitions on the merits, rather than consider them moot and academic. If these things continue, then you know the media and freedom of the press may become academic at a certain point. There's a threat that this will be done again. A state of emergency can be called again," Drilon said.

Fr. Joaquin Bernas, a noted constitutionalist, also raised the possibility that the high court would issue a ruling on Ms Arroyo's controversial Proclamation No. 1017.

He cited two previous cases questioning Ms Arroyo's use of her

GMA OPPONENTS / A6

Women rule House, but only for a day

By Michael Lim Ubac

WOMEN HAVE TAKEN OVER THE House leadership—but only for a day.

Women legislators yesterday took over the reins of power from Speaker Jose de Venecia and House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles in observance of Women's Month.

The symbolic gesture is part of a monthlong celebration to push for key pro-women and family legislation.

Nueva Ecija Rep. Josefina Joson, chair of the House committee on women, presided over the session, while Cebu Rep. Clavel Martinez was majority leader.

Wearing a pink terno, Ilocos Norte

Rep. Imee Marcos served as minority leader in lieu of Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero.

The rest of the 37-woman bloc in the chamber delivered privilege speeches on varied issues such as women in governance, experiences during martial law, intensifying women's role in technology, breastfeeding, the equality of Muslim men and women, and reproductive health.

They also filed a resolution questioning the plight of Gabriela party-list Rep. Liza Maza who, along with four other militant lawmakers, had been placed under House custody after being ac-

WOMEN / A14

Cops not amused by mock beauty pageant vs GMA



POLICE YESTERDAY DISPERSED A mock beauty pageant calling for President Macapagal-Arroyo's ouster and arrested an organizer just days after the President lifted a state of emergency, saying the threat of a coup had diminished.

About two dozen women activists from the left-wing Akbayan party were preparing to stage the colorful protest when riot police pushed them with shields, arresting a male

COPS / A6

'Crash' pulls off Oscar upset for best picture

LOS ANGELES—"CRASH" PULLED OFF ONE of the biggest upsets in Academy Awards history, winning best picture on Sunday over the front-runner "Brokeback Mountain."

"Crash," featuring a huge cast in crisscrossing story lines over a chaotic 36-hour period in Los Angeles, rode a late surge of praise that lifted it past the cowboy romance "Brokeback Mountain," a film that had won most other key Hollywood honors.

"We are humbled by the other nominees in this category. You have made this year one of the most breathtaking and stunning maverick years in American cinema," said "Crash" producer Cathy Schulman.

Schulman was commenting on a year that saw the box office sinking, provocative independent films dominating big studio fare and a tiny-budgeted ensemble drama from outside Hollywood taking first prize.

Philip Seymour Hoffman was named best actor for playing homosexual writer Truman Capote in "Capote," while Hollywood sweetheart Reese Witherspoon was voted best actress for her performance as country singer June Carter in "Walk the Line."

George Clooney won an Oscar for best sup-

'CRASH' / A7



ANG Lee poses with his Oscar for best director for "Brokeback Mountain," the first Asian to garner the award.



PHILIP Seymour Hoffman, adjudged best actor for his role in "Capote," and Reese Witherspoon, best actress for her role in "Walk the Line," meet press photographers backstage with their trophies.

Cops nab big resin importer for smuggling

By Luige A. del Puerto and Leila B. Salaverria

IN ONE OF THEIR MOST DECISIVE ACTIONS against smuggling, which costs the government some P100 billion in foregone revenues yearly, police arrested on Sunday an importer with purported ties to the First Family.

Police arrested Samuel Lee, 41, after he disembarked from a plane from Hong Kong.

Shortly after, the police investigator, Chief Supt. Jesus Versoza, sent a text message to reporters calling Lee "the most notorious smuggler of plastic resin."

Before the arrest, police seized three container vans full of plastic resin, which Lee allegedly took out of the Bureau of Customs on March 4. Resin is a major component in the manufacture of plastic products, such as chairs and tables.

"They are well-entrenched. They are con-

COPS NAB / A6

Bro. Eddie accuses gov't of censorship

By Alcuin Papa

ALTHOUGH EVANGELIST BRO. Eddie Villanueva maintained it was government-inspired censorship, the QTV network said yesterday it did not air an episode of "Diyos at Bayan" which dealt with the Edsa 1 anniversary and Proclamation 1017 because the show did not live up to the station's rules on balanced presentation of issues.

Villanueva, a defeated presidential candidate and strong critic of President Macapagal-Arroyo, claimed in an interview that a government agent had called the QTV or GMA 7 not to air the episode because it "did not conform with the standards" set by PNP chief Arturo Lomibao.

The program is produced by Villanueva's Zoe TV, which owns the franchise to operate Channel 11 but turned over the station's operation to GMA 7 for a fee and the right to keep some of his programs on the air.

In a statement sent to the INQUIRER, Jojo Aquino of QTV's Corporate Communication Department said that the station did not air the "Diyos at Bayan" episode on Feb. 26 "because it was not in accordance with QTV's policy on balanced treatment of issues."

"The top management of co-producer/blocktimer Zoe Broadcasting Network is aware of this policy," the statement said.

It said the decision "had nothing to do with Proclamation No. 1017. The network has exercised

this option with "Diyos at Bayan" in the past—even before Proclamation 1017 was issued."

The program's host, veteran broadcast journalist Kata Inocencio, said in a separate interview that there was "nothing threatening" about their discussion.

Inocencio said the "Diyos at Bayan" episode was a discussion on the Edsa 1 anniversary. Her guests were three lawyers, including Atty. Lorna Kapunan, and some members of the religious. But since Proclamation 1017 was in effect at that time, the discussion veered toward it.

In the discussion, Kapunan and other lawyers voiced opposition to 1017, one nun pointed to surveys showing Ms Arroyo was unpopular, while a priest denounced the breaking up of rallies on Feb. 24. Inocencio said, adding that Bishop Julio Labayen spoke of the need to resolve the "Hello Garci" controversy.

Inocencio said she did not invite any politician, militants or Leftists or anyone from the government to avoid politics. "So I don't know what they mean by balanced... You can't get anymore balanced with civil society. There was nothing threatening and I don't think what they said was seditious or rebellious."

Neither she nor Villanueva found fault with GMA or QTV.

"It seems GMA and QTV were adversely affected by the threat of the administration based on Proclamation 1017. They are also victims of suppression of the press," Villanueva said.

Palace readies English version of 1017 video

By Christine O. Avendaño

APPARENTLY, THE GOAL WAS not winning the hearts and minds of Filipinos alone. Targeting the international community, Malacañang is now producing an English version of its video documentary explaining why President Macapagal-Arroyo declared a state of national emergency nearly two weeks ago.

The English version of the 12.5-minute documentary "Paglaban sa Kataksilan: 1017" is being prepared by film and television director Lupita Aquino Kashiwahara, who put together the original version in Filipino, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

He said the new version was aimed at the international community in the wake "requests from different embassies."

The documentary, produced on recommendation by the National Security Council, discusses the al-

leged alliance between rightists, leftists and some members of the opposition in a plot to bring down the Arroyo administration which the government claimed to have foiled last Feb. 24.

Government officials claimed that soldiers belonging to the Scout Rangers and the Philippine Marines were to have marched to the Edsa 1 anniversary rallies and announced the military's withdrawal of support from Ms Arroyo to force her to step down.

"We encourage all citizens to view (the documentary) that will give them an enlightened view about the security threats that precipitated the imposition of a state of national emergency," Bunye said in a statement.

Bunye said that VCD copies of the documentary, which may be viewed on the government's www.gov.ph website, would be available upon request.

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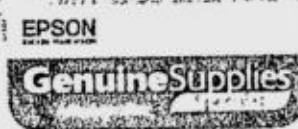
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Traders face probe for coup links

By Jolene Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

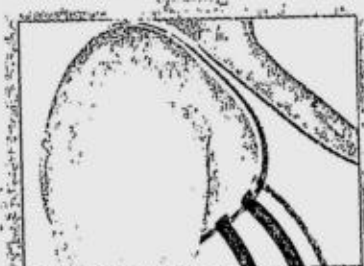
CEBU CITY—JUSTICE Secretary Raul Gonzalez has ordered regional offices of the National Bureau of Investigation to check out local businessmen who allegedly financed the destabilization plot against the administration.

Gonzalez yesterday confirmed a statement made here by Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz that there was an ongoing investigation based on intelligence reports that some businessmen allegedly conspired with destabilizers.

"We are still investigating. The information we received is not accurate yet. I would rather not discuss the details so as not to warn some sectors about our moves. The order for the NBI to probe is on a nationwide basis," Gonzalez told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday.

He refused to say whether or not Cebuano businessmen were included in the investigation.

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Energy Independence – Forty six percent of the country's total energy consumption is imported; almost 99% of the gasoline used is sourced abroad. As each day goes by, Filipinos continue to suffer the effects of the worldwide energy crisis. The swelling oil prices coupled with the fluctuation of the local currency easily translate to the constant increase in the prices of electricity and transport fuels. These in turn result in higher transport costs and subsequently, in the escalation of prices of major commodities. While countries like the members of the European Union, the United States, Brazil, Australia, China, India, and Thailand have already realized the potential of developing fuel ethanol, the Philippines has yet to activate its pursuit of energy security. Once again, the country is lagging behind global trends.

Environment – The use of fuel ethanol has numerous advantages. Bioethanol, for example, improves the environment because its high level of oxygen increases the efficiency of the combustion process. Being natural, fuel ethanol reduces particulate emissions, especially fine particles that pose health threats to children and senior citizens. Fuel ethanol also abates greenhouse gases, which are considered as the main contributors for global warming, by reducing fossil fuel use. The burning of imported fossil fuels results in the release of toxic chemicals affecting human health. This situation is most evident in highly-urbanized areas like Metro Manila and Cebu City where air pollution is caused largely by fuel combustion engines. Fuel ethanol indeed promotes the preservation of the environment and the wellness of the general public.

Employment – The production of alternative fuels will spark capital investment, job creation, and economic development in the Philippines, especially in the countryside. Since the production of biofuels requires processing homegrown agricultural crops, it can create direct employment in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. With a comprehensive biofuels program in place, agricultural products will be used not only for food, but for fuel as well. Farmers' products will then be in demand, consequently increasing their incomes. Moreover, the land areas or products to be devoted to biofuels do not diminish on the country's food security basket. The nascent bioethanol industry alone is expected to create no less than 100,000 employment opportunities, mostly in the rural areas. Biofuels is the potent and long-term remedy to the issues of unemployment, urban migration, and the need for rural development.

Economy – The Philippine economy is expected to increase greatly in combined agriculture and manufacturing value added should a domestic fuel ethanol industry be established and sustained. For example, the nationwide use of 5 to 10 percent ethanol in the country's gasoline pool is expected to contribute to the expansion of the economy by 70 billion pesos over the next ten years. In addition, improved domestic fuel security brings about reduced reliance on fossil fuels. With the expected use of ethanol under a National Biofuels Program, which shall ensure the use of 5 percent blend of ethanol in gasoline from year 2007 to 2010 and 10 percent blend from 2010 to 2017, a total of 3.7 billion liters of gasoline shall be displaced over a ten-year period. This accounts for savings in foreign exchange of a total of no less than US\$1 billion over ten years or US\$100 million annually. In other countries, bioethanol reduces the consumer cost of gasoline by extending supplies, providing an alternative to costly imported oil.

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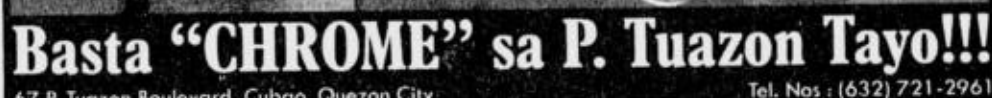


www.bioethanol.com.ph

By Philip C. Tubeza

Arroyo said that if these officials ignored the summonses, the Senate would proceed with its investigation and issue

"But above everything else, media is still under siege," Arroyo said. "Journalists are now informed that they are under watch, that if they write anything that is seditious, then a charge will be filed against them."



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GMA opponents shift battle to Supreme Court

From page A1
powers as Commander in Chief.

In a May 2001 case involving an attempt by supporters of ousted President Joseph Estrada to march on Malacañang, the court held that the issue had become academic after Ms Arroyo rescinded her declaration of a state of rebellion.

However, Bernas recalled that the court dealt Ms Arroyo a setback in the Oakwood mutiny case in 2003 when it ruled even after the President had lifted a similar proclamation that a state of rebellion "cannot diminish or violate constitutionally protected rights."

No more actual controversy

On Friday, Ms Arroyo scrapped Proclamation No. 1017, saying the "cabal" of communist guerrillas, rebel soldiers and politicians that had plotted to oust her had been broken.

In a 38-page consolidated com-

ment, Solicitor General Alberto Benipayo asked the court to dismiss seven petitions to declare 1017 illegal "on ground of mootness."

"There is no more actual controversy upon which judicial review may be exercised in the cases at bar. To be sure, courts have no more authority to pass upon issues of constitutionality solely for academic exercise of advisory opinion," he said.

Benipayo admitted that the plan to proclaim a state of national emergency had been made months in advance. He said Ms Arroyo was a step ahead of terrorists and destabilizers.

"[The] President had the foresight to see this through, like a long-distance runner who believes not only [in the] here and now but in the advancement of the people's welfare in the long run," he said.

The incidents cited to justify the proclamation included the reported discovery on Feb. 16 of

"Operation Plan: Hackle"—an alleged plot to grab power during the alumni homecoming of the Philippine Military Academy in Baguio City. Bombs were later reportedly found on the PMA parade grounds.

Also cited was the recapture of an escaped Oakwood mutineer, Lt. Lawrence San Juan.

A computer "flash disk" was reportedly seized from San Juan—denied by his lawyer—purporting to show an alleged alliance between rebel soldiers and the communist New People's Army.

Benipayo also cited the supposed meeting in the home of former Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, where a coup plot was reportedly discussed, according to an account in the weekly newsmagazine Time.

Press remains free

He dismissed claims that basic rights were violated while 1017 was in effect.

"The clearest manifestation of a free press is the continued and untrammelled publication of over 20 newspapers within Metro Manila alone. Counting the local dailies in the various regions, provinces, cities, municipalities, barangays, and even organizations everywhere, this country must indeed be the most gracious host to the most prolific writers in the whole world," Benipayo said.

"The presence of the police at The Daily Tribune and other media premises was intended to secure them against lawless elements who might take over the media facilities to carry out and promote their objectives of overthrowing the existing government," he said.

"It is not true that the President banned the holding of rallies on Feb. 24, 2006, or any time thereafter," Benipayo said.

"In truth, the government itself was constrained to cancel all its

activities and programs for the day at the People Power Monument not because it wanted to do so but because the Quezon City government had revoked its permit for the purpose."

Mayors issue rally permits

He pointed to a letter dated Feb. 24, 2006, to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita from Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. revoking the permit to rally, adding that the "issuance and revocation of rally permits are the prerogatives of the local mayors."

Presidential Chief Legal Counsel Eduardo Antonio Nachura said government lawyers would appear as directed at the Supreme Court hearing today and would present arguments justifying the issuance of 1017 on Feb. 24. Then the lawyers would ask the court to dismiss the petitions on the ground the issue had become moot.

"We feel that the position taken by President Arroyo is constitutionally defensible," Nachura said.

Quezon Rep. Erin Tañada said the lifting of 1017 was "to preempt" the tribunal from acting on the challenge.

"My main thought was that she was afraid that maybe the Supreme Court might rule against it," he said.

Effects of emergency remain

But Drilon pressed the high tribunal to rule on the merits of the petitions. He cited the statements made by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez that the government was continuing to monitor media activ-

ities and the virtual detention of lawmakers at the House of Representatives.

"The justice secretary is the official who determines whether a prima facie case of sedition or inciting to sedition or libel exists against a member of the media, and for him to say we're watching you, can you imagine the chilling effect of such a pronouncement," Drilon said.

Gonzalez had justified the government's move to monitor seven more print and broadcast journalists for possible charges of inciting to sedition in connection with their coverage of the Feb. 26 standoff at the Marine headquarters in Fort Bonifacio.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno had earlier ordered the filing of sedition charges against Daily Tribune publisher and editor in chief Ninez Cacho-Olivares and two of the newspaper's columnists.

Drilon also bewailed the virtual detention of party-list Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador (Bayan Muna); Liza Maza (Gabriela) and Rafael Mariano (Anakpawis) at the House.

The lawmakers had sought protective custody at the House after the police threatened to arrest them on rebellion charges following the emergency declaration.

"Obviously, they're detained because their freedom is restricted to the Batasan. Under what authority ... (a)re they being detained on the grounds that they are continuously committing acts of rebellion?"

The issues had become so "muddled" that they had to be clarified by the high tribunal, Drilon said.

Malacañang open ...

From page A1

greater unity and professionalism in our soldiery," he said.

Bunye said Malacañang was looking forward to such a meeting "or series of meetings at the [earliest] possible time."

Malacañang indicated Ms Arroyo's willingness to attend such a meeting a day after she lifted her emergency proclamation, which she imposed on Feb. 24 in the face of what the Palace said was a coup plot.

Generals deny involvement

The "Hello Garci" controversy centers on supposed wiretapped conversations between Ms Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano on the poll results.

The names of Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. (then chief of the Special Operations Command), Southcom chief Maj. Gen. Gabriel Habacon (then chief of the 1st Infantry Division) and then Southcom chief Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko (ret.) cropped up in the conversations.

The three generals have denied involvement in any fraud. The INQUIRER tried to contact Esperon, the most senior of the generals, but his mobile phone appeared to have been turned off.

The military had set up a fact-finding body to look into the matter but its findings have not been made public.

BCBP appeal ignored

Ms Arroyo herself has not thoroughly explained her side in the wiretapping controversy, despite widespread demands for her to make a full disclosure of what she discussed with the poll official before she was officially proclaimed the election winner.

"I think the Arroyo administration has not taken the pastoral letter seriously at all," Lipa Archbishop Ramon Arguelles said, referring to the statement issued by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines urging the relentless pursuit of the truth behind the "Hello Garci" controversy.

Medroso said the CBCP appeal was "just ignored."

Truth 'covered up'

"It seems that everything is being covered up," the Samar prelate said. "As events go, I don't think there is a sincere search for truth."

At the Senate, defense committee chair Rodolfo Biazon said the Department of National Defense still had not complied with the request of the Commission on Appointments for the results of the military investigation into the alleged involvement of generals in poll cheating.

"Until now, there's still none. You should ask them. If they don't want to submit it, then don't," an exasperated Biazon said.

He said he would insist that the confirmation of Esperon be deferred until the defense department produced a copy of the investigation results.

"Let's see what happens. Definitely, the results should be released since this issue has become a problem of the whole country," Biazon said.

Prolonged restiveness

He said he believed that the restiveness in the Armed Forces would persist until the issue was addressed.

"This has been a longstanding issue. I even relayed this to the President after I met with some of the officers on July 2 last year, (but) it continues," he said.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga has told the CA that the military investigation did not focus on the generals mentioned in the "Hello Garci" tapes but only "considered the possible unprofessional conduct of any member of the Armed Forces during the elections of 2004."

"I need to examine the contents of the AFP investigation report because ... we have to examine each statement of the 72 resource persons called to that investigation to be sure and very clear that the Constitution was not violated," Biazon said.

Lim summoned by NBI

Pressing its probe into the alleged coup plot against Ms Arroyo, the National Bureau of Investigation ordered Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim to appear at the NBI on Wednesday in connection with a Time magazine article on the supposed coup plot.

Lim, of the Scout Rangers, was one of those mentioned in the article, along with other personalities like former Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco and civil society leader Pastor "Boy" Saycon.

NBI Special Task Force chief Reynaldo Esmeralda said the bureau issued a subpoena to Lim after Saycon admitted in a written letter to the NBI that he had talked to the general on the phone during a meeting at Cojuangco's house on Feb. 23.

"We will ask Lim about his conversation with Saycon," Esmeralda said, describing the Army officer as "a material witness."

Esmeralda added, "We will ask him to clarify if they were indeed plotting against the administration or if they were just harmless by confirming reports about the coup plot as Mr. Saycon said in his statement." *With a report from Margaux C. Ortiz*

Cops not amused by mock beauty pageant vs GMA

From page A1

organizer for illegal assembly, police and activists said.

The "beauty contestants"—opposition party activists—were wearing gowns, cardboard crowns and paper sashes that read "Miss State of National Emergency" and "Miss Martial Law."

The protest occurred at the intersection of Tomas Morato and Timog avenues in Quezon City.

Ms Arroyo's emergency decree was widely criticized for banning rallies, allowing arrests without warrants, and permitting the President to call in the military and the police to intervene and take over public facilities, including media outlets.

Ms Arroyo had said the move was necessary to restore order.

Fake moles

The women protesters also had fake oversized moles on their left cheeks in imitation of Ms Arroyo.

When police plucked Akbayan coordinator Jessie Dimaisip from the crowd, the women insisted they also get into the police truck with him.

Some climbed on the vehicle's roof and chanted protest



WOMEN activists who participated in the mock beauty pageant held in Quezon City remain defiant while being hauled off by policemen for staging a protest without a permit.

RAFFY LERMA

slogans all the way to police headquarters, Percival Cendaña of Akbayan said.

'Missed State'

Police officer Norberto Reblora said charges of illegal assembly were being prepared against Dimaisip.

"It was a mock beauty pageant called the 'Missed State of the Nation' and it was supposed to be a peaceful cultural show that did not merit riot police presence," Cendaña protested. "How could they have had an illegal assembly when they had not yet assembled?"

Dimaisip was later released.

Chief Supt. James Brillantes, head of the Quezon City Police District Intelligence Division, justified the dispersal, saying the protesters had no permit.

"(They) even shouted unsavory remarks against the government," Brillantes said. AP; Nancy C. Carvajal

Cops nab big resin importer for smuggling

From page A1

sidered untouchable, until now," said Senior Supt. Benjamin de los Santos, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-Criminal Intelligence and Detection Division.

Lee was presented to media yesterday in Camp Crame, where investigators said those involved in the resin smuggling included customs officials. Lee refused to speak to reporters.

Weeks of surveillance

Lee's arrest was the result of weeks of surveillance in the Philippines and Hong Kong. Police said they had infiltrated his company and managed to gain access to his firm's computer files.

As evidence against Lee, police said they had the statements of deep penetration agents, corporate records, computer files, previous importation documents and even Lee's cell phone, which De los Santos said "contained incriminating evidence."

"Pay the tax. I'll send the money. But antedate the receipt," De los Santos quoted one of the text messages on Lee's phone as saying.

Smuggling, which has been the subject of complaints by the Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI), had prompted a Senate inquiry months ago.

The FPI estimated that the government was losing P100 billion a year due to smuggling, based on a comparison of data from the International Monetary Fund (which said \$45 billion worth of goods was shipped to the country in 2000) and the BOC (which claimed that the country imported only \$32 billion that year).

Vicky Toh

At one Senate hearing, Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales was grilled about the

supposed smuggling activities of a businessman close to Vicky Toh, who had been linked to First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, and Pure Gold Duty Free owner Lucio Lao Co, who was also said to be close to the First Family.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has warned that people using her husband's name to expedite transactions at the BOC will be arrested.

Senators initiated the probe following reports that Toh's associates were reportedly smuggling luxury cars, cell phones, electronic items, garments, foodstuffs and other goods.

The lawmakers identified some of the alleged smugglers as Samuel Lee, David Tan, Lucio Co, Basilio Tan and Johnny Trajano.

List of smugglers

Senators chastised Morales after he feigned ignorance of big-time smugglers, like Lucio Co, who was on a 2004 smugglers list and the siblings Vicky and Tomas Toh, who had allegedly been facilitating imports in behalf of a Sammy Lee, according to INQUIRER columnist Ramon Tulfo.

So far, the BOC has only conducted a records check on the listed names. Lack of funds has hampered the surveillance of the suspects' activities, according to Deputy Commissioner Celso Templo, the customs intelligence chief.

Morales yesterday said he would look into the possible complicity of customs personnel in Lee's illegal activities.

He said he would not be swayed by any attempt by powerful people to get the bureau to go easy on Lee.

"The President instructed us to pursue smugglers. If there's sufficient evidence against him, we'll file the case," he said.

Quoting bureau intelligence reports, police said Lee had been operating as far back as 2001.

Dummy corporations

He had also set up more than a dozen "dummy corporations" in an attempt to shield himself from prosecution, according to the police.

The three container vans were diverted to one of those dummy corporations, Consumer Plastic Packaging Corp. in northern Metro Manila, a violation of Section 3601 of the Tariff and Customs Code, the police said.

Various government agencies, including the military's intelligence arm, have been tapped to build a case against Lee and the other suspected smugglers.

"We are targeting not only this guy but all the rest mentioned in the Senate hearing," De los Santos said.

But police said they had yet to verify Lee's alleged links to either of the Toh siblings.

59 container vans

Lee, according to De los Santos, was "personally directing" the release of the container vans.

"After filing the import entry, he left for Hong Kong. That's why we conducted a pursuit operation, and he was forced to come back (here) to save the shipment," De los Santos said.

The three vans seized by the police cost about P3.5 million, according to the CIDG.

Versoza, the group's chief, said 59 other container vans registered under Lee's name remained at the customs area. Police are coordinating with Morales in seizing the container vans in favor of the government, Versoza said in a statement.

Those implicated might include officials of Liontex Enterprises, the alleged consignee of

the vans, and Harbor Links Brokerage Services Corp., the alleged broker.

Bribery

Police also charged Lee with bribery after he offered P300,000 to the head of the arresting team, Insp. Pedro Velasco.

Under the law, importers are supposed to store imported materials in licensed customs bonded warehouses, where they would be processed into finished products for export.

Importers pay a nominal tariff fee of anywhere between P30,000 and P100,000 for each container van.

"But if you follow direct consumption value and pay taxes, each container van costs about P1 million," De los Santos said.

Swing

To get around that, they make the "swing." That is, smugglers take them out of bonded warehouses and deliver them to "end users" who, in turn, use them as raw materials for products, which are then sold locally.

The announcement of Lee's arrest coincided with the filing of charges against eight people accused of violating the Tariff and Customs Code.

Facing complaints of misdeclaring a P3-million rice shipment as packing machines were Franco Arsisio, proprietor of Arisicor General Merchandising; Joel Ruiz, proprietor of Joruan General Merchandising; customs broker Wendylyn Cabang; Enrique Dizon, president of Great Harbor Services Corp., and the latter's officers, namely, Liberty de Ramos, Walter de Ramos, Elenia Ambrosio and Josephine Fabro.

Arisicor General Merchandising and Joruan General Merchandising were the consignees of the rice shipment from Hong Kong. *With a report from Michelle V. Remo*

'Crash' pulls off Oscar upset for best picture

From page A1

porting actor for his role as a world-weary CIA agent in the oil industry drama "Syriana." British actress Rachel Weisz ran away with the best supporting actress award for playing a social activist who is murdered for her beliefs in the thriller "The Constant Gardener."

"Brokeback Mountain" filmmaker Ang Lee did win the prize for best director for the tale of two old sheep-herding pals who carry on a love affair they conceal from their families for years.

First Asian

Lee, whose martial arts epic "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" won the Oscar for best foreign language film five years ago, became the first Asian to garner Hollywood's main filmmaking honor.

"I'm so proud of the movie," Lee said backstage, where he was asked if he was disappointed that his film about gay cowboys lost best picture and what might have kept it from winning. "Why they didn't go for it, I don't know. You're asking a question that I don't know the answer to. Congratulations to the 'Crash' filmmakers."

Front-runners usually prevail, but there have been some notable dark horse winners at past Oscars. Underdogs that came away with best picture include "An American in Paris" (over "A Place in the Sun" and "A Streetcar Named Desire"); "The Greatest Show on Earth" (over "High Noon") and "Chariots of Fire" (over "Reds" and "On Golden Pond").

It was a share-the-wealth evening, with six different films splitting the top six Oscars.

"Brokeback Mountain" won two others—adapted screenplay for Larry McMurtry ("Lonesome Dove") and Diana Ossana and musical score for Gustavo Santaolalla.

"Crash" also won for the original screenplay by the film's director, Paul Haggis and Bobby Moresco.

In a year of challenging films at the Oscars, "Crash" was one of the fiercest, a portrait of simmering racial and cultural tension among blacks, whites, Hispanics, Asians and Iranians.

The other nominees for best picture emerged either out of Hollywood studios or their art house affiliates. But "Crash" was a true Oscar rarity, shot outside the system on a \$6.5-million budget, then acquired by independent distributor Lionsgate at the 2004 Toronto International Film Festival, where the film premiered.

Rule breakers

"Crash" became a solid box-office hit, grossing \$55 million in the United States.

Haggis noted that his film defied convention with its tiny budget and release date early in the year, which usually is considered a barrier for Oscar season. "This is the year that Hollywood rewarded rule breakers," Haggis said backstage.

The large cast of "Crash" includes supporting actor nominee Matt Dillon, Don Cheadle, Sandra Bullock, Brendan Fraser, Terrence Howard, Thandie Newton, Chris "Ludacris" Bridges, Jennifer Esposito and Ryan Phillippe.

Witherspoon won a close race over Felicity Huffman in a gender-bending performance as a transsexual in "Transamerica."

"Oh, my goodness I never thought I'd be here in my whole life growing up in Tennessee," said Witherspoon, who like costar Joaquin Phoenix as Carter's soul mate, country legend Johnny Cash, handled her own singing in "Walk the Line."

"People used to ask June how she was doing, and she would say I'm just trying to matter. I know what she means," said Witherspoon, who told the audience the Oscar made her feel she was doing work that matters.

Hoffman's performance nimbly straddles the magnetic qualities of raconteur Capote and the effete, off-putting egotism of the author.

"Wow, I'm in a category with some great, great actors, and I'm overwhelmed. Really overwhelmed," said Hoffman, who asked the Oscar audience to congratulate his mother for bringing up four children alone.

"We're at the party, mom," Hoffman said. "Be proud, mom, because I'm proud of you."

Clooney's win capped a remarkable year, during which he made Oscar history by becoming the first person nominated for acting in one movie and directing another. Along with performing in "Syriana,"



GEORGE Clooney holds on to his Oscar trophy for best supporting actor for his role in "Syriana."

Clooney directed the Edward R. Murrow tale "Good Night, and Good Luck," which earned him directing and writing nominations and was among the contenders for best picture.

In "Syriana," Clooney effaced his glamour boy looks behind the bearded, heavyset facade of a CIA patriot who grows jaded over US oil policy in the Middle East. He joked that an Oscar always would be synonymous with his name from then on, including in his obituary.

"Oscar winner George Clooney, sexiest man alive 1997, 'Batman' died today in a freak accident," said Clooney, who also lauded Oscar voters for their daring.

"This group of people gave Hattie McDaniel an Oscar in 1939 when blacks were still sitting in the back of theaters," Clooney said, referring to the supporting actress winner from "Gone With the Wind," the first black performer to receive an Oscar.

In "The Constant Gardener," adapted from

John le Carre's novel, Weisz played a humanitarian aid worker whose fearless efforts against questionable pharmaceutical practices makes her a target for government and corporate interests in Africa.

Weisz thanked costar Ralph Fiennes and director Fernando Meirelles, "and of course, John le Carre, who wrote this unflinching, angry story. And he really paid tribute to the people who are willing to risk their own lives to fight injustice. They're greater men and women than I."

Hip-hop tune

The raucous hip-hop tune "It's Hard Out Here for a Pimp" from "Hustle & Flow," whose expletive-laden lyrics had to be toned down for performance at the Oscars, won the prize for best song. The song was written by the rap group Three 6 Mafia, aka Jordan Houston, Cedric Coleman and Paul Beauregard.

Featuring dancers dressed as hookers and pimps gyrating on stage, the song's performance stood in sharp contrast to the other nominated tunes and the general stateliness of the Oscars.

"You know what? I think it just got a little easier out here for a pimp," joked Oscar host Jon Stewart.

The stop-motion family tale "Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit" won the Oscar for best animated feature film. The Antarctic nature tale "March of the Penguins," a surprise smash at the box office, was honored as best documentary.

"King Kong," from "Lord of the Rings" creator Peter Jackson, won three Oscars—for visual effects, sound mixing and sound editing. The Japan drama "Memoirs of a Geisha" also earned three—for cinematography, costume design and art direction, while the fantasy epic "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" was picked for best makeup.

South Africa's drama "Tsotsi," based on Athol Fugard's novel about a young hoodlum reclaiming his own humanity, won for foreign language film, beating the controversial

Palestinian terrorism saga "Paradise Now."

Producer Pia Clemente, the first Filipino-American woman to receive an Academy Award nomination, failed to bring home the Oscar.

The award for best short film live action went to Martin McDonagh, producer of "Six Shooter." Clemente and writer-director Rob Pearlstein were nominated for "Our Time is Up," a comedy featuring Kevin Pollack. AP

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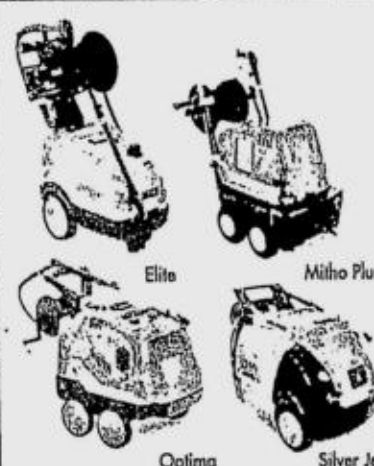
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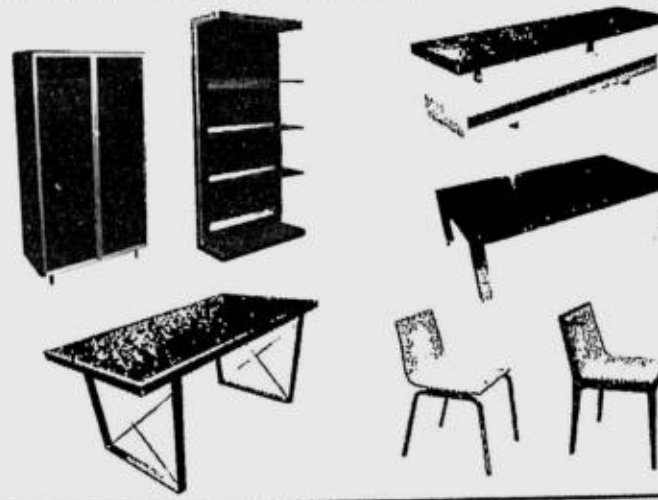
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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Thaksin defiant in face of turmoil

BANGKOK, THAILAND—THAI PRIME MINISTER Thaksin Shinawatra dismissed calls for his resignation Monday, after thousands of antigovernment demonstrators marched to his office and insisted protests would continue every day until he steps down.

"I will not resign because my resignation will not resolve anything," Thaksin told reporters.

At least 100,000 protesters filled the streets around Government House on Sunday and stayed until well past midnight following a boisterous rally accusing Thaksin of corruption and abuse of power. Some 2,000 remained on Monday.

Thaksin left the capital, Bangkok, early Sunday to campaign in the northeast for snap elections he has called for next month, and said he had not personally followed the events of the rally but was informed by aides that protesters "were insisting on ousting me."

"We should not allow these people to chase the prime minister out of office. We should help uphold the democratic system," he said at his hotel in the northeastern Khon Khaen province.

Tens of thousands of Thais have been demanding Thaksin's resignation at regular weekend rallies in recent months, putting him on the defensive and leading to the country's biggest political

crisis since 1992, when street protests forced the ouster of a military-backed government.

The prime minister has repeatedly rejected calls for his resignation and instead called snap elections for April 2.

Opposition parties have vowed to boycott the elections, which Thaksin—whose populist policies have earned him widespread popularity in rural areas—would almost certainly win.

Most of the protesters who remained camped out overnight were members of the Buddhist Santi Asoke sect whose leader Chamlong Srimuang is among Thaksin's most powerful opponents. They spent the night at Sanam Luang, the Royal Field, where the protest had been staged.

"We will protest every day to pressure Thaksin until he resigns," Chamlong told The Associated Press. He said anti-Thaksin activists, who include many from Bangkok's middle class, were asked to return to their daily lives but reassemble after working hours every day.

"The country has faced a crisis because of one person. The people will kick him out in a few days," university lecturer Somkiat Pongpaibul told the rally.

Over and over, the protesters shouted "Thaksin out! Thaksin out!"

The anti-Thaksin campaign swelled last month after the prime minister's family sold its controlling stake in telecom giant Shin Corp. to a Singapore state-owned investment company netting 73.3 billion baht (US\$1.9 billion; euro1.55 billion). Critics allege the sale involved insider trading and tax dodges and complain that a key national asset is now in the hands of a foreign government.

Police estimated that about 50,000 people initially gathered Sunday evening at Sanam Luang before the crowd swelled to more than 100,000 when protesters marched on Government House. But organizers were more bullish.

Publisher Sondhi Limthongkul, a key figure in the anti-Thaksin People's Alliance for Democracy, said that moving "200,000 people" through the streets of Bangkok without sparking a major confrontation was "a victory."

At Sanam Luang, speaker after speaker lambasted Thaksin. He was satirized in a comic Chinese opera, burned in a mock funeral, and called a liar in song. The protesters then began their march.



A DEMONSTRATOR holds a poster of Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra with a Hitler-like moustache, depicting him as a dictator, next to protesters sleeping in front of the Grand Palace in Bangkok, March 6. AFP

UN watchdog meets to weigh Iran snub

VIENNA—THE UN ATOMIC watchdog's board of governors meets on Monday to weigh Iran's snub-of calls to curb nuclear activity, opening the way to possible UN Security Council action over concerns Tehran covertly seeks atom bombs.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Mohamed ElBaradei will submit a report to the 35-nation meeting saying Iran has largely ignored a resolution demanding that it take steps to defuse a crisis of confidence in its nuclear program.

ElBaradei's report will be forwarded to the Security Council after the gathering as mandated

by a board vote a month ago after three years of IAEA probes often parried by Tehran.

No new resolution was expected because the February motion, which at the insistence of Russia, China and developing states gave Iran a month to comply, was deemed enough for the Council to take up the issue.

John Bolton, US ambassador to the United Nations, warned Iran faced "tangible and painful consequences" if it pushed ahead with uranium enrichment and Washington would use "all tools at our disposal" to neutralize Tehran's atomic project.

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Monday warned the

West that further pressure on Tehran would have consequences.

"If they exert political pressure on us, we will revise our decisions and change our behavior," the official Irna news agency quoted him as saying.

"There is no need for them to create problems for themselves and for us. They should accept the Iranian nation's rights, then cooperation can be done," he added.

When the Council might act remains unclear. The timing could hinge on the course of talks between Russia and Iran on Moscow's offer to enrich uranium on Tehran's behalf to prevent siphoning of nuclear materials into secret bomb-

making on Iranian soil.

Iran's top nuclear negotiator on Sunday repeated that its uranium-enrichment research drive was non-negotiable. He vowed Tehran would pursue industrial-scale nuclear fuel production if the Council tackles its case, potentially with sanctions.

Another Iranian official, deputy secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Javad Vaeedi, repeatedly said in an interview with Reuters that Iran would not change its mind about its research and development activities.

"The research and development activities have started and it is irreversible," Vaeedi said. Reuters

WORLD BRIEFS

Pakistan troops kill 50 pro-Taliban fighters

MIRANSHAH, Pakistan—Pakistani troops using artillery and helicopter gunships killed at least 50 pro-Taliban militants and lost five of their own men in one of the fiercest clashes so far in a restive tribal region bordering Afghanistan, officials said Sunday. The fighting erupted Saturday afternoon and raged through the night in the towns of Miranshah and Mir Ali in North Waziristan tribal district. A military statement said security forces retaliated after militants attacked army and paramilitary camps from three directions with rockets and small and heavy arms.

Chinese serial killer

BEIJING—Police in northeast China have detained a 32-year-old man suspected of sexually assaulting and killing more than 20 children, state media reported Monday. Gong Runbo is believed to have lured the children to his apartment in Jiamusi city in Heilongjiang province where he carried out the killings and often left the bodies to decompose, the Beijing News said. He was only stopped on Feb. 28, when a boy escaped from the killer and managed to alert the police, according to the paper. Officers sent to search Gong's apartment came across a gruesome scene of rotting bodies and scattered bones, it said.

Vanilla from cow dung

TOKYO—Japanese researchers have succeeded in making the sweet smell of vanilla come out of the last thing people could imagine—cow dung. In a world-first recycling project, a one-hour heating and pressuring process allows cow feces to produce vanillin, the main component of the vanilla-bean extract, according to researcher Mayu Yamamoto. The vanillin extracted from the feces could be used in products such as shampoo and aromatic candles but not in food, said Yamamoto, who works for the Research Institute of the state-run International Medical Center of Japan. Compared with usual vanilla, "this component is exactly the same but it would be difficult for people to accept it in food, given the recent rules of disclosing the origins of ingredients," she said.

Celebrex safety confirmed in clinical trial

NEW YORK—In a report in the March 2006 issue of The American Journal of Medicine, researchers from eight university and hospital health centers and healthcare company Pfizer presented the results of a large, multinational, controlled clinical trial in patients with osteoarthritis. Over 13,000 patients from 39 countries in six continents were randomly assigned for treatment with either the first COX 2 inhibitor celebrex 100 mg twice daily (BID), celebrex 200 mg BID, or nonselective NSAID therapy (diclofenac 50 mg BID or naproxen 500 mg BID) for 12 weeks. Results from all primary efficacy assessments showed that both dosages of celebrex were as effective as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) in treating the signs and symptoms of osteoarthritis. However, celebrex was associated with a significantly better upper gastrointestinal safety profile than the nonselective NSAIDs naproxen or diclofenac arms combined. There was no significant difference between celebrex and the NSAID group in any cardiovascular adverse event rate, with the exception of investigator-reported cardiac failure. The incidence of cerebrovascular disorders was low and statistically similar between the groups. The risk of myocardial infarction (MI) was also low and statistically similar among the treatment groups.

Chinese dies of bird flu; virus spreads in Europe

HONG KONG—A MAN HAS DIED FROM BIRD flu in southern China, the ninth death from the H5N1 virus in the country, the official Xinhua news agency reported on Sunday.

The man, identified as a 32-year-old with the surname Lao, was the 15th human bird flu case in China. He died in Guangdong province, which borders Hong Kong.

In Europe, France announced a new case of H5N1 in a wild duck in the east of the country, while another test on a wild swan showed the virus had spread several hundred kilometers to the south.

France's poultry sector, Europe's biggest, is losing 40 million euros (\$48 million) a month after an outbreak of H5N1 at a poultry farm. The news prompted more than 40 countries to impose curbs on French poultry products, including foie gras.

In eastern Europe, Poland detected its first case of H5 bird flu in two swans found dead. Further tests would be needed to determine if it was the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain of the

virus or a less dangerous form, experts said.

The H5N1 bird flu virus has killed at least 94 people in East Asia and the Middle East since late 2003. Victims contract the virus through close contact with sick poultry.

However, scientists fear the virus could mutate to spread from person to person, triggering a global pandemic.

Lao had symptoms of fever and pneumonia on Feb. 22 and died on March 2, Xinhua said. The symptoms appeared after Lao made several visits to an agricultural market where he spent a long time near "a live poultry slaughtering site," Xinhua said.

Of the 14 previous cases in China, eight were fatal, two are under treatment and the other four have recovered.

China has reported more than 30 outbreaks of the H5N1 strain in birds across the country in the past year. None of these has been in Guangdong, but neighboring Hong Kong has confirmed several cases, fueling suspicions that authorities were not being truthful about the situation in Guangdong province.



THE POLISH agriculture ministry confirmed Sunday the first two cases of H5 bird flu in Poland, detected in swans found dead in Torun. AP

US solons seek overhaul of review process on foreign deals

WASHINGTON—LEADING LAW-makers on Sunday called the secretive US government foreign investment review process that approved an Arab company's deal to assume terminal operations at six US ports flawed and in need of overhaul.

Senate Homeland Security Chair Susan Collins, a Maine Republican, said she and the panel's top Democrat, Sen. Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, will introduce a bill to overhaul the process and give Homeland Security the lead.

In an interview with ABC's "This Week," Collins said national

security agencies need a bigger voice in the process now led by the Treasury Department.

"I think we need to scrap the committee, start again, constitute it within the Department of Homeland Security, have the secretary of Homeland Security chair it, have a member of the intelligence community on it, which is not the case now ...," Collins said.

Sen. Charles Schumer, a New York Democrat and a leading voice against the deal, told CNN's "Late Edition" that the Treasury-led Committee on Foreign Investments in the United States, or

CFIUS, will be changed.

The panel in January approved the takeover by Dubai Ports World of terminal operations at six US ports, including operations in New York and New Jersey.

"We need to change the CFIUS process, to overhaul it, to make it more open, to make it more thorough and to put a greater emphasis on national security," Schumer said.

Rep. Duncan Hunter, the California Republican who heads the Armed Services Committee in the US House of Representatives, told ABC's "This Week" that the decision could be reversed once

US President George W. Bush gets more information.

"I think (CFIUS) looked at it from a very superficial level, and they didn't get the intelligence briefs that go to Dubai's activities to transship things like centrifuge parts," Hunter said. "I think if the president gets that information ... I think we're going to see a turnaround."

A bill sponsored by Hunter calls for sensitive facilities, such as ports and power plants, to be owned by Americans.

Dubai Ports World's takeover of the global assets of Britain-based P&O unleashed a political

firestorm over the past few weeks, prompting the Bush administration to agree to an additional 45-day inquiry in addition to the initial probe.

Bush has said security concerns were unwarranted because the UAE is a strong ally and has threatened to veto any legislation blocking the deal.

Marine Gen. Peter Pace, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on Sunday praised the UAE for its military cooperation with the United States.

"What I can tell you is that military to military ... we could not have better cooperation from United Arab Emirates," Pace said

on "Fox News Sunday."

Mohammed Sharaf, chief executive officer of Dubai Ports World, told CNN's "Late Edition" the company operates all over the world and would lose business if it were not trusted.

"We have customers whose vessels call at our terminals, which cost hundreds of millions," Sharaf said. "Not only the vessel, the goods on them cost hundreds of millions of dollars."

If they don't have any confidence in our operation, they would not bring their ship to our terminals."

Reuters

The WORLD Homeland Security HQ 'insecure'

WASHINGTON—THE AGENCY ENTRUSTED with protecting the US homeland is having difficulty safeguarding its own headquarters, say private security guards at the complex.

The guards have taken their concerns to Congress, describing inadequate training, failed security tests and slow or confused reactions to bomb and biological threats.

For instance, when an envelope with suspicious powder was opened last fall at Homeland Security Department headquarters, guards said they watched in amazement as superiors carried it by the office of Secretary Michael Chertoff, took it outside and then shook it outside Chertoff's window without evacuating people nearby.

The scare, caused by white powder that proved to be harmless, "stands as one glaring example" of the agency's security problems, said Derrick Daniels, one of the first guards to respond to the incident.

"I had never previously been given training ... describing how to respond to a possible chemical attack," Daniels told The Associated Press. "I wouldn't feel safe nowhere on this compound as an officer."

Daniels was employed until last fall by Wackenhut Services Inc., the private security firm that guards Homeland's headquarters in a residential area of Washington. The company has been criticized previously for its work at nuclear facilities and transporting nuclear weapons.

Homeland Security officials say they have little control over Wackenhut's training of guards but plan to improve that with a new contract. The company defends its performance, saying the suspicious powder incident was overblown because the mail had already been irradiated.

Two senators who fielded complaints from several Wackenhut employees are asking Homeland's internal watchdog, the inspector general, to investigate.

"If the allegations brought forward by the whistle-blowers are correct, they represent both a security threat and a waste of taxpayer dollars,"

Democratic Senators Byron Dorgan of North Dakota and Ron Wyden of Oregon wrote. "It would be ironic, to say the least, if DHS were unable to secure its own headquarters."

Daniels left Wackenhut and now works security for another company at another federal building. He is among 14 current and former Wackenhut employees—mostly guards—who were interviewed by The Associated Press or submitted written statements to Congress that were obtained by AP.

A litany of problems was listed by the guards, whose pay ranges from \$15.60 to \$23 an hour based on their position and level of security clearance. Among their examples of lax security:

- They have no training in responding to attacks with weapons of mass destruction;
- Chemical-sniffing dogs have been replaced with ineffective equipment that falsely indicates the presence of explosives.
- Vehicle entrances to Homeland Security's complex are lightly guarded;
- Guards with radios have trouble hearing each other, or have no radios, no batons and no pepper spray, leaving them with few options beyond lethal force with their handguns.

Wackenhut President Dave Foley disputed the allegations, saying officers have a minimum of one year's security experience, proper security clearances and training in vehicle screening, identification of personnel, handling of suspicious items and emergency response.

"In short, we believe our security personnel have been properly trained, have responded correctly to the various incidents that have occurred ... and that this facility is secure," he said. He declined, however, to address any of the current or former employees who have become whistle-blowers.

Wackenhut is no stranger to criticism.

Over the last two years, the Energy Department inspector general concluded that Wackenhut guards had thwarted simulated terrorist attacks at a nuclear lab only after they were tipped

off to the test; and that guards also had improperly handled the transport of nuclear and conventional weapons.

Homeland Security is based at a gated, former Navy campus in a college neighborhood—several miles from the heavily trafficked streets that house the FBI, Capitol, treasury department and White House.

AP

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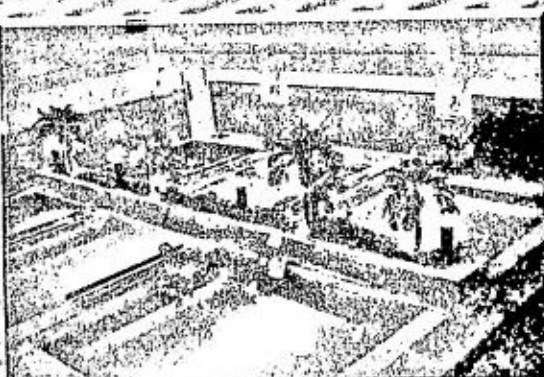
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The press and presidents

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO OBVIOUSLY has not learned the lessons of history. No leader or president has tangled with the press and muzzled it and come out the winner. Regimes and presidents that tried to suppress the press were ultimately overthrown.

In the late 19th century, Spain tried to put down the Propaganda Movement but failed. The Spanish authorities thought that Jose Rizal was the leader of the independence movement, and so they had him tried and executed. But the Propaganda Movement, part of the larger move-

EDITORIAL ment for Philippine independence from Spain, did not die. Rizal's martyrdom only spurred the Filipinos to fight more fiercely against the Spaniards. Ultimately, the Filipinos won, but their victory—and their independence—was taken away from them by US Adm. George Dewey's forces through a ruse.

The Americans enhanced the Filipinos' practice of freedom of the press, but they were not above trying to suppress it. They were more concerned about getting complete control of the entire archipelago, and applied the "inciting to sedition" law very stringently.

Almost all the presidents of the Philippines, from Emilio Aguinaldo to Ms Arroyo, had their problems with the press, but most of them did not try to stifle press freedom. The notable exceptions were Ferdinand Marcos who muzzled the press by imposing martial law, Joseph Estrada who tried to bend the critical press to his will by filing multimillion-peso libel suits and mounting an ad boycott, and Ms Arroyo who targeted media with her proclamation of a state of emergency.

Marcos began his martial-law regime by closing down Congress, banning rallies and padlocking newspapers and radio and TV stations except those owned by the government and his cronies. In the beginning, the press submitted to all sorts of restrictions. Theirs was a coerced obedience obtained at the point of a gun. But as the years went by, the press found its voice, and underground publications cropped up. "Xerox journalism" supplied the people with the real news, as distinguished from the propaganda and sanitized reports that were provided by the government and the crony press.

Toward the end of his authoritarian rule, Marcos even tolerated the "mosquito press" or "alternative press" and pointed to it as proof that his regime was "democratic" and did not violate human rights and liberties.

But it was the press that unmasked Marcos and showed him to be the lying, cheating, corrupt and oppressive tyrant that he was. And when the opportunity presented itself, an enraged populace, stirred up by the exposés published by the foreign press and the Philippine "mosquito press," rose up against Marcos, and in a four-day revolt, toppled the hated dictator.

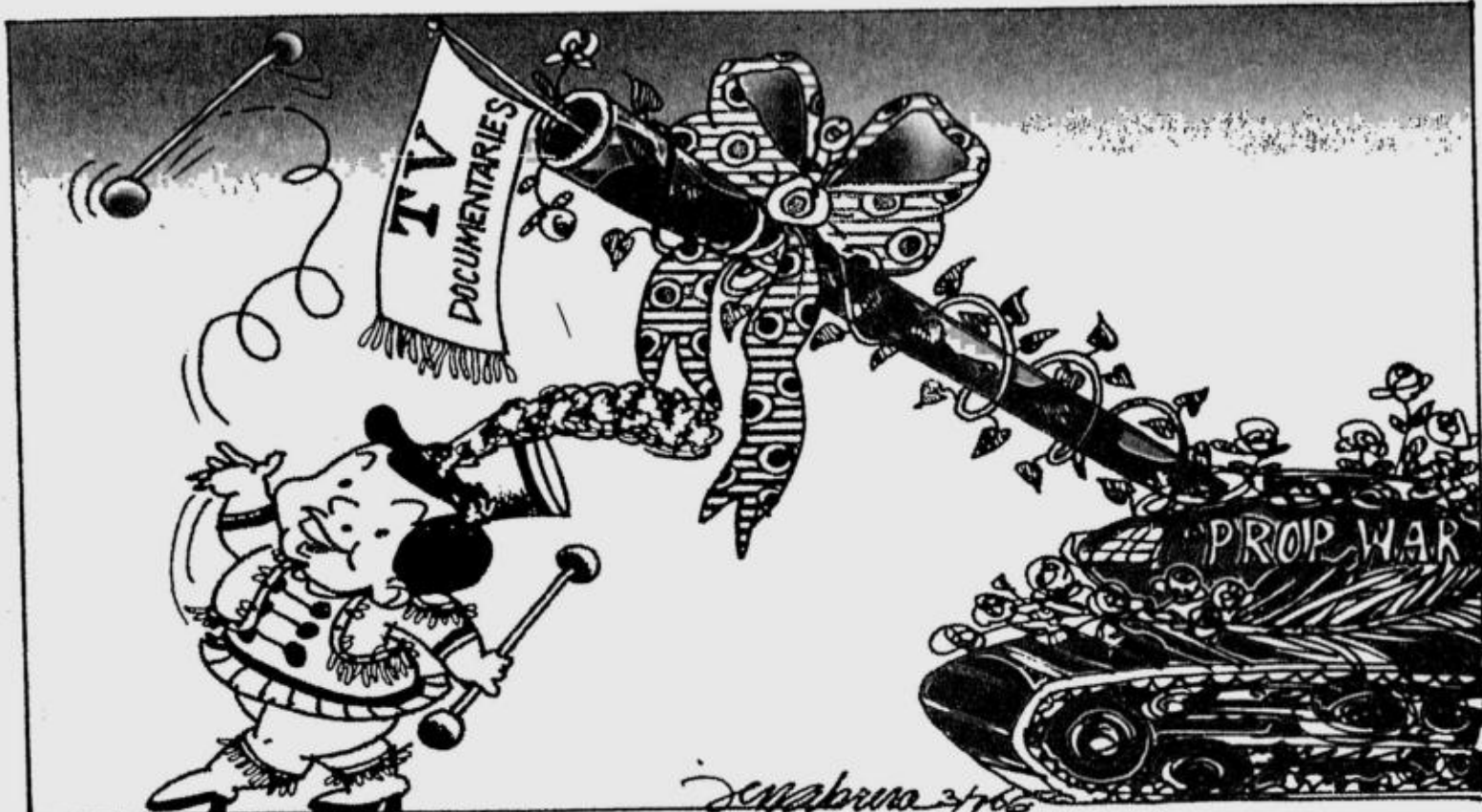
Estrada thought that he could control the press by bribing it. Previously, as a movie actor, he had given entertainment reporters generous gifts to ensure that they would give him a good press. But the national public affairs press was a different thing. The media reported both his good and bad points. They did not spare his family, his cronies and his mistresses and published exposés about them to show the extent of the corruption during the early years of his term.

Estrada cracked down on The Manila Times, and its owners, who have other businesses, thought that prudence was the better part of valor and decided to sell the paper rather than risk having their other businesses squeezed by the government. Next, Estrada and his business cronies mounted an ad boycott against the INQUIRER and tried to bring it down to its knees. The INQUIRER didn't surrender, and in the end, it was Estrada who gave up, and the ads returned to the INQUIRER.

But by then it was too late. The corruption and incompetence of Estrada had been exposed by the press and the people began clamoring for a change. The clamor reached its climax in Edsa II. Estrada was overthrown and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was installed as president.

Only last week, Ms Arroyo sought to suppress dissent and criticism from the opposition and the press by issuing Presidential Proclamation No. 1017. She must have been surprised by the strong protest that followed, for after only a week, she lifted the proclamation. But the threat to press freedom remains; only the other day it was reported that seven more media personalities were being targeted by the administration.

What history shows is that no Filipino president has ever prevailed over the press. Does Ms Arroyo really believe she can bring it off this time?



Another 'Rolex 12'?

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado



SO, IS THERE A JUNTA IN OUR FUTURE?

That question bugs many in the pause that followed President Macapagal-Arroyo's lifting of the state of emergency. No one should unbuckle his seat belt just yet. There's turbulence ahead because the interlocking causes remain.

Poverty is massive. An avaricious ruling class conducts "business as usual." The communists try to hijack any movement in their bid for power. In the provinces, many fold their hands, saying a tainted opposition offers no credible alternative. Who'd stand up for Erap, Jinggoy, Franklin or Joma?

The administration gropes for ways to wield the mailed fist, even after scrubbing Proclamation 1017. "But at the crisis" center is the President's determination to hang on to power and evade accountability within the present constitutional system," warns the Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture's Melba Padilla-Maggay. "More people are being pulled towards military adventurism as an option" as "third generation" unresolved grievances fester.

Edsa was a civilian-led initiative against dictatorship. The military morphed from martial-law enforcer into a backer of People Power. Now, the shoe is on the other foot. At Fort Bonifacio, armed Marines hunkered down in a chapel and called for civilian support to legitimize their move.

Again, people refused to rise. This failure to muster People Power may not be apathy but a "sign of increasing political maturity," says Maggay. "In this time of ambiguity ... people look for credible and moral leadership."

However, "the worry many people have is that a time is coming when the military will unite and do away with civilian rule altogether," Lin Neumann writes in Asia on Line. He quotes Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr: "I think the army is calling the shots or will be soon... They're going to start making emperors somewhere other than Rome."

So, will we have another "Rolex 12"? Remember the cabal of mostly military offi-

cers who got Rolex watches from Ferdinand Marcos for helping clamp on martial law? Under Rolex 12 "reforms," Military Commission No. 1 sentenced former Sen. Benigno Aquino to death by firing squad after a kangaroo trial. The Military Intelligence Security Group became a torture chamber, starring Rolando Abadilla and Panfilo Lacson. Over 300,000 became *desaparecidos*.

Look at the reaction of religious groups and leaders. They played a key role in People Power.

"Any military posturing" would only burden impoverished people, Cardinal-elect Gaudencio Rosales warned on Edsa Day. It'd make the Philippines a pariah in the international community. "At its worst, [this] is seen as the military grabbing the supremacy from the civilian... Edsa's People Power is really civilian power."

In their "Preliminary Guidelines for the Present Situation," Filipino Jesuits point out that aside from ventilating legitimate grievances, groups in the military are pressing for a coup. "Transitional juntas, with civilians participating, appear to be envisioned."

"Any attempt to seize state power, however well motivated, cannot be supported," writes Jesuit provincial Fr. Daniel Huang. The experience of countries in which a politicized military has taken state power—or "banana republics"—gives sobering illustrations of these consequences. "Once having captured the state, military forces have not given up power easily. A cycle of constant struggles for state control among military elements begins, to the detriment of political stability, democratic

freedoms and national development."

Myanmar's junta suspended the constitution in 1988. Its last elections was in 1990. And the generals imprisoned the winner Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. It rules by decree; the press is gagged; no independent courts function. And the generals are linked to illegal logging, drugs and human rights violations. Earlier, there was Thanom of Thailand and Franco of Spain.

Latin American juntas display the same pattern. The Somoza regime in Nicaragua ended in 1979, after two sons succeeded Anastasio who created his junta in 1936. The sorry parade includes Alfredo Stroessner of Paraguay, "Papa Doc" Duvalier of Haiti, Gen. Alfredo Pinochet of Chile and Manuel Noriega of Panama. All caudillos claimed they were "guardians of the people." *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* (And who guards the guardians?)

In his article "Philippines: Military On The Move," Neumann writes of an officer who insists that abuses "will continue unless there is a restructuring, a cleansing. The only one that can do that change is the military." Made in all sincerity, the claim turns a blind eye to Rolex 12 and history.

So, will a junta be our savior, like it or not? The most oppressive is a tyranny "exercised for the good of its victims," C.S. Lewis once wrote. Robber-baron are sometimes sated, oftentimes relax. "But those who torment us, for our own good, will torment us without end because they do so with approval of their conscience."

Democracy doesn't grow out of a gun barrel. It "demands the rule of civilians who are legitimately chosen from and by the people, and not simply kept in power by military might," the Jesuit guidelines state. And that clearly excludes another Rolex 12 group.

"At age four, with paper hats and wooden swords, we are all generals," the British actor Peter Ustinov says in the play "Romanoff and Juliet." "Only some of us never grow out of it."

Revenge of the 'trapos'

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



plains how GMA has gained power and kept it. It's something that was suggested to me by the analyses—or what passes for them in these parts—that appeared in several newspapers after the 2004 elections. Those analyses said that GMA's victory at the polls showed that the reign of the entertainers over politics was over. GMA had shown that the most popular actor in this country could be beaten.

At the time those analyses appeared, which was long before the Garci tape surfaced, I was prepared to believe that GMA might have won the elections by a variety of cheating but not by the outright manufacturing of ballots. The cheating, I thought, consisted of the massive pillage of the treasury (PCSO and Pagcor, in particular) and use of government offices to campaign, dirty tricks like the tearing down of posters of rival camps, and old-fashioned wholesale vote-buying. As it turned out, it wasn't just that. Even with that kind of cheating and with the opposition's propensity to self-destruct, Poe was still popular enough to win the elections. That was what compelled GMA to call up Garci.

But let us leave Garci for the nonce. GMA might not have won the elections but she won the crown anyway. She might not have won by force but she won by force. Now the question is: How did she get the country to accept that?

She did so by harping on a fear that had been building up in the country since the 1990s, the fear of the entertainers overrunning politics. That fear gripped two groups of people who profoundly abhorred the thought.

The first was the middle class. That was the bulwark of People Power I and II, which felt that it subverted everything Edsa stood for.

Edsa stood for a politics of substance, the entertainers stood for a politics of silliness. That was the equation. I maintain that Edsa II was a legitimate exercise of People Power, but I would not also put it past many of those who mounted it to have been motivated by a desire to get back at the one person who symbolized the reign of the entertainers, Erap. Edsa achieved many things, but it also opened the floodgates to the possibility of stopping the entertainers not by hook but by crook, not by vote but by violence.

More than the middle class, the second group saw the entertainers as Satan's spawn. That was the traditional politicians, whose star (pardon the irony) particularly in national elections had dimmed dramatically and stood to be snuffed out completely unless something drastic was done. They were being battered right and left by the actors, singers and basketball players notwithstanding the organization, personnel and money at their command. They were determined to do something about that misfortune, and found the perfect opportunity for it in the 2004 elections. GMA stole the elections, but they not only went along with it, they made sure it would stick. Never more would an entertainer seize Malacañang, even if it killed them—or better still killed the entertainers—to do it.

The analysis that the 2004 election marked the end of the reign of the entertainers is true in part. It did, not because GMA won the vote against a popular actor, but simply because she and the *trapos* mugged the electorate with the tacit consent of the middle class. The analysis in fact merely raises a more important question, which is: If the 2004 elections ended the reign of the entertainers, then who came to replace them?

In fact, what happened was not a step forward, it was a step backward. It was not progress, it was retrogression. It merely brought back what had been there before the entertainers stopped being entertaining by going into politics: The rule of the *trapos*.

May 2004 was the revenge of the *trapos*. (To be concluded)

TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2006

OPINION

A11

Nelly's word against Peping's

PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE CHAIR Jose "Peping" Cojuangco recently sought in a news article to discredit the story of Time magazine reporter Nelly Sindayen implicating him in a plot to bring down the Arroyo government. Cojuangco said the gathering in his Makati residence that Thursday night was to plan for a reunion of sports personalities who had participated in the recent SEA Games. His wife, Local Government Undersecretary Margarita Cojuangco, rushed to his defense in her Star column last Sunday, saying it was also a birthday celebration for their daughter Mikee. If they had a sinister plot, said Tingting, why would they have a big family gathering with various people coming and going? Besides, she said, they're both government officials and her husband's politics does not necessarily coincide with that of his sister Cory Aquino. Tingting virtually labelled Sindayen as hallucinating.

The argument about government officials not being able to plot against their boss doesn't hold. As we all saw, eight Cabinet officials plotted against GMA last July. Besides, Cojuangco and his alleged co-plotter, Pastor Saycon, were involved in the plot against Erap, but early on they openly griped against GMA. In fact, the rapprochement between him and GMA for the Games seemed a welcome development.

Ultimately, it's Cojuangco's word against Sindayen's and here she has the edge as she has worked with Time since the late 1970s. Why would she concoct something that could get her fired? As to being misled by Saycon, she is too much of a grizzled veteran for that.

The military malcontents are said to be pressing for the truth about the involvement of top generals in election manipulation for GMA, as a basis for talks with her. But it's also clear that the perennial coup plotters may be shopping for issues. Back in 1987 and again 1989, in the bloodiest coup that confronted Cory Aquino, what were the issues brought up by the same malcontents? Among them were the Kamag-anak Inc.'s alleged corruption and President Aquino's alleged cavorting with

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



the Left. I suspect that there will always be a group of discontented elements in the military, who think they are God's gift to the nation and that they alone hold the key to running the country well, especially with our politicians being what they are. Issues are just excuses. Thank God, these aberrant military are a minority in the AFP.

By the way, one indication of how disastrous military adventurism can be was the fact that before the rebel siege of Makati in 1989, our GDP was growing at 7.4 percent. After that siege, GDP growth dropped to two percentage points, which translated to P120 billion in economic losses and 600,000 lost jobs. From then on, the slide continued until it led to full economic recession in 1991.

A friend called me up to say she overheard over ANC, the assertion made that Alay sa Kawal Foundation belongs to Erap and that it was the source of the incredible largesse the deposed president showered on several rebellious groups. As founder of this NGO dedicated wholly to the welfare of widows and orphans of common soldiers killed or disabled in combat, I deny this. I would like to think that mistaking it for Erap's Sundalo Foundation was an innocent one. Alay sa Kawal will never be used for political purposes, although the members of its board have different political leanings.

The fight between two factions of the Liberal Party is filled with irony. When former LP president Franklin Drilon decided to break away from GMA last July 8, flanked by 18 other leaders, LP chair Lito Atienza immediately branded the move as "unauthorized" since it allegedly did not have

the approval of the rest of the party. Even Club Filipino waiters were made to vote, grumbled Atienza. Since then the LP rank and file members were pressing Drilon to convene the national directorate to resolve the thorny issue of the break from GMA, but he failed to do so. A few days ago, the Manila mayor led a coup that deposed Drilon, and the latter promptly labeled it unauthorized. "Even City Hall employees were made to vote," snorted Drilon. Observers said Drilon just got a dose of his own medicine.

Today the Drilon faction gathers at Club Filipino to discuss what to do with the rebel forces. There are hints that the party might expel those who participated in the coup. But that may be difficult to do since the Drilon faction seems to have a lot of generals but few troops on the ground. Atienza counted among those who attended the meeting last Thursday 16 congressmen, four governors, five vice governors, five city mayors, 150 municipal mayors (including 12 from Drilon's home province of Iloilo), 51 board members (including six from Iloilo). If all these are expelled, the LP would be downsized "from a coaster to a Volkswagen," as Antique Gov. Sally Perez put it.

An INQUIRER story quoted an American military officer, who helped in the rescue work in Southern Leyte, as saying that Gov. Rosette Leria reminded him very much of how former New York City Mayor Rudolf Giuliani took control of the situation in that city after the 9/11 attacks. The officer praised Leria's hands-on style that inspired her people and kept them going in the face of despair and sorrow.

I, too, am all praises for Leria's leadership. I first noticed her during the post-July 8, 2005 crisis, when she joined a number of lady governors rallying behind GMA. Before the Manila media, she proved most articulate. I learned later that she had taught speech and mass communications at the University of the Philippines for 20 years. The daughter of the late Speaker Nicanor Yniguez, she has won three terms as governor. Indeed, she's one of the many gems among our local officials.

Some kind of jackpot

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



group discussions—all demanding the "return of the comeback" of "Wowowee" and of its host, Willie Revillame.

Vivian Tin, who heads ABS-CBN's research department, disclosed that the network had long labored under an "image problem." Despite its efforts to cater to the "masa" market (and despite our own skepticism), most survey respondents, she said, considered ABS-CBN elite territory, "ang lugar ng mga magaganda" (the place for beautiful people), as one respondent described them. It wasn't until "Wowowee," through no strategy of the programming geniuses of ABS-CBN, that the common people truly bought into Channel 2's "kapamilya" conceit.

It didn't start out as mainly a show built on audience participation, admitted Charo Santos-Concio who heads the entertainment department. "Wowowee" was supposed to simply build on the audience share of Kris Aquino's "Game Ka na Ba?" (with ABS-CBN apparently conceding to rival "Eat Bulaga's" dominance of the variety show genre). But through some unforeseen dynamic and Revillame's uncanny touch with the studio audience, "Wowowee" evolved into a show in which the entertainment factor was provided by the people themselves, with even the skimpily-clad dancers and beautiful co-hosts shunted aside.

I CAN'T speak with any authority, not being a "Wowowee" viewer myself, but the few shows I did catch seemed infested with a kind of fevered camaraderie, with everyone in the studio trying to outdo everyone else in applauding the hosts, screaming out their joy and jumping with glee up

on receiving cash prizes.

An overseas Filipino, who seems to be a regular "Wowowee" viewer over The Filipino Channel, wrote a pained e-mail soon after the Ultra tragedy. In hindsight, she remembers how she recoiled at times at what Revillame would have the audience members do. He seemed to single out the "lolas," who it turns out are Revillame's biggest fans, for teasing and not a little humiliation, requiring them to sing, dance, twirl, or smile toothless grins before he would hand out a cash prize. Revillame has conceded that "Wowowee" was less a game show than an excuse to give away money (no wonder it was so popular). Embarrassment was a small price to pay in exchange for enough money to tide one over for at least a few days.

In the wake of the stampepe, Revillame, as well as other studio executives, said all they wanted to do was to "help" people in the audience. "Give them hope," Santos-Concio said. And it was this hope that killed so many of them.

AS I wrote before, truly, nobody wanted this to happen. The least we can hope for is that everybody would pick up the right lessons.

In a way, perhaps ABS-CBN has. Santos-Concio says "Wowowee" would undergo some reformatting. Instead of just letting the winners walk away with their money, they would receive counseling on how best to maximize it. Some winners would get not cash but "kabuhayan" (income-generating) packages, that would allow them to earn a decent living. A foundation called "71 Dreams," after the 68 women and three men who died in the stampepe, will organize the surviving family members. Lopez and other executives and employees have also "adopted" the families of the Ultra victims.

Indeed, one of the most heart-rending anecdotes from the period was a remark made by a friend's house help who told her she "envied" the women who died in the stampepe "because they are sure at least that their burial will be taken care of." In a society like ours, dying in an event for which a rich network is at least partly responsible is already considered some kind of jackpot.

The return of the radicals

WORLD VIEW

Jack A. Goldstone

TWENTY-SIX YEARS AFTER THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION, just when the West had expected Iran to settle down and become more pragmatic, the regime of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad seems to have lurched back toward radicalism. By looking at earlier revolutions, we can perhaps come to understand what is happening in Iran, for recent events there have clear historical precedents.

Many revolutions have passed through an initial "quiet" period after an early phase of radicalism, only to experience a resurgence 15-25 years later. This is because the initial quiet period is often marked by corruption and a retreat from revolutionary goals, leading idealists to feel that the revolution is losing its way. Believing that stronger pursuit of revolutionary ideals is the only way to strengthen their country, these idealists seek to inspire a "return of the radicals," triggering sharp conflict with their more pragmatic co-revolutionaries.

The Mexican Revolution of 1910 began with a challenge to the dictator Porfirio Díaz that ignited peasant uprisings and worker revolts. The revolution's radical phase seemed to end in 1920 when Gen. Alvaro Obregón seized power; he limited land reform and sought reconciliation with the United States. For the next 14 years, Obregón and his ally Gen. Plutarco Calles ruled Mexico.

Then, in 1934, resentment against growing corruption led Calles to choose an "honest idealist" to become president, a young man who had fought for him early in the revolution, who he thought he could control but who would help the government regain popularity. That "honest revolutionary," Lázaro Cárdenas, toured the country, building his popular support, and then turned on Calles, expelling him from Mexico.

Known for both his radicalism and his honesty, Cárdenas refused to live in the presidential palace and cut his salary in half. He also took seriously the early goals of the revolution, embarking on massive land reform. In 1938-28 years after the revolution began—Cárdenas provoked a major confrontation with the United States and Britain by expropriating their oil companies and

nationalizing Mexico's petroleum. Only in the 1940s, after Cárdenas left power, did Mexico turn to a more conservative political path.

Similarly, China's Communist Revolution began with a decade of attacks on the middle and professional classes and a reshaping of the countryside, culminating in the Great Leap Forward of 1958-59. But that disastrous campaign weakened Mao's influence; by the early 1960s he seemed to be relegated to the sidelines while pragmatists like Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping grew stronger.

Yet Mao worried that his revolution was going off track, and in the mid-1960s he launched an effort to regain control of the party by educating a new generation of radical youth. These "Red Guards" launched the Cultural Revolution in 1966-68, targeting the more conservative elements within the Communist Party. The Cultural Revolution tore China apart, but it returned Mao to supreme power and allowed him to purge the pragmatists.

But did the battle between pragmatists and radicals end there? In the early 1970s, moderates gained by engineering a rapprochement with the US, capped by Richard Nixon's famous visit to China in 1972. Deng was rehabilitated the following year, and in the late 1970s, after Mao's death, Deng's pragmatists seized control of the regime.

What do these historical examples suggest for Iran? It is likely that the relatively calm period dating from Khomeini's death in 1989 is over. The election of Ahmadinejad marks the onset of new struggles within the ruling Islamic Republic Party. These pit the "honest radicals"—led by Ahmadinejad and supported by younger, second-generation revolutionaries known as the Abadgaran,

or Developers, who are strong in the Iranian parliament—against the more corrupt and pragmatic mullahs who head the party, led by Expediency Council Chairman and former President Hashemi Rafsanjani. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei is left in the middle, perhaps increasingly isolated and without strong popular support.

How should the US and European leaders respond? Historically, phases of resurgent radicalism have lasted 5-10 years, marked by greater aggressiveness against internal and external enemies. This bodes ill for improved relations with Iran in the short run, and makes it imperative that Western powers unite to make it unambiguously clear that any use of nuclear weapons or materials by Iran or terror groups aligned with Iran will result in an immediate and devastating response. (China developed its nuclear weapons just before its Cultural Revolution, mainly to deter the Soviet Union, but never used them.)

It also seems advisable to offer positive incentives—including US recognition and an end to sanctions—that could help empower pragmatists in their intra-party struggle, much as Nixon's overtures to China helped blunt China's radicalism and strengthened the hand of pragmatists in the Communist Party.

Nixon did not demand that China's leaders abandon communism or that Mexico become a competitive democracy, only that they act responsibly and learn to do business with the US. Five decades after its revolution, China is still not a democracy, and Mexico is only just becoming one nine decades after its revolution. Neither country always sees eye to eye with the West. But both became countries with which it is possible to do a great deal of business, and both are increasingly integrated into the global economy. That may be the only realistic goal in dealing with Iran. Project Syndicate

Jack A. Goldstone is professor of Public Policy at George Mason University and the editor of "The Revolutions of the Late Twentieth Century" and "The Encyclopedia of Political Revolutions."

Rising from the mud

IT WAS THE LARGEST CEMETERY I HAVE EVER SEEN. Weeks after I first arrived in Nakar, no amount of "sweet dreams" can keep the nightmares from coming.

In the second week of December 2004, five days after two super-typhoons struck Quezon Province in succession, some colleagues and I volunteered to make the uncomfortable trip to bring relief goods to Nakar. It was my introductory meeting with the community that would set me off on my journey as a development worker.

YOUNG BLOOD

Joy Bailey

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

The sight of what would become my second home for the next five months was worse than what television showed. In addition to the gloomy weather and eerie atmosphere, I was welcomed by scenes that hurt both the eyes and the heart. The only distinguishable color all around was brown: logs, mud, rivers and sea. The whole town was one big burial site. The flood and the landslides buried not only human beings but also properties and dreams.

I had never imagined that as a student working on my master's degree, I would be posted in a "disaster area." As soon as the typhoons struck, the fieldwork committee made a decision: I would be sent to Nakar. My first question was, "Is that on the Philippine map?"

My question was soon answered by the Philippine Daily Inquirer. Nakar was on its front page. There were photos of collapsed bridges and buildings, eroded mountains, buried houses, huge logs and body parts among the rubble.

The images were horrible to look at. But the horror got worse when you saw the real thing. Which I did—except for the body parts.

My first visit put my emotional stamina to a severe test. I was greeted by mothers who described what hit them as *delubyo* (a deluge). On their worn, fatigued and sad faces, I could see angst, confusion and helplessness. They would queue for one whole day, as in previous days, for relief goods. Many walked for three hours over the roughest roads, only to return home empty-handed.

At that time, I wished I could do more. I felt helpless. And small. And useless. But all I had were my ears to listen to their anguish and my hands to pat their shoulders in commiseration and comfort as they recounted their ordeal with tears in their eyes. I tried as much as I could to console them, but I knew I was not easing their pain no matter how much sincerity I showed.

But Nakar was my community, and whatever sacrifice and heartbreak it might cost me, I had to hang on. So I faced the challenge of working with a community in peril and ended up a more mature person with a better version. Now, I remember Nakar not as a place of broken lives and broken dreams but as a community rising from the mud.

When I accepted the challenge, I put my own life in peril. At the time, the road leading to Nakar was still threatened by more landslides. I imagined mud, boulders and coconut trees cascading down to bury my petite frame. One wrong turn by Kuya Jules and we would have ended up 50 meters below because the road had been eroded in many parts and there were no warning signs to guide us.

Our host families feared that the tragedy would revisit their place anytime. When we were trying to sleep, even raindrops sounded like thunderstorms. The waves that used to gently hum, sounded like gongs announcing bad news. Our fears and anxieties underscored the urgent need for the government to come up with programs for more effective disaster response and disaster risk management.

I experienced realities that the media overlooked. I saw how lining up for relief goods diminished the survivors' sense of self-worth. Can you understand how a farmer used to eating his own export-quality rice feels about eating weird-looking and weird-smelling rice?

I saw people taking advantage of others' misfortune. Felled logs were collected for personal and commercial consumption. Items that looked like relief goods were being sold at exorbitant prices. Some donors handed out relief goods only if the media were around to report their generosity.

Helping people who were helping themselves kept me going. Our people's resiliency is beyond measure. Despite the tragedy and their personal losses, the people of Nakar could still tell jokes about each other. The children would often give me huge hugs in appreciation for what I was doing. And these gave me reason to keep going back.

Family life in Nakar did not disintegrate. Instead the people's common goal of rising again brought together the members of the community. I witnessed the *bayanihan* spirit at its best in full display. Efforts to rebuild were initiated by the people themselves. And this made me realize that external organizations should at all times recognize the local people's skills and native know-how in coping with disasters.

I have already completed my fieldwork in Nakar, but indelibly etched in my memory is every scene, every person and every event that have made me the person that I have become. They taught me:

1. There is no such thing as a dead-end because always there are options.
2. To love and let live because some events are uncertain, and they come whether one expects them or not.
3. To carry my own sunshine wherever I go.
4. Some of life's journeys need to be taken in solitude.

Joy Bailey, 23, works with an international environmental organization. She is completing her master's in community development at the University of the Philippines in Diliman this year.

THEY SAID

Controversial act

"I'm not sure what the controversy is about. Hugh Grant, an Englishman, plays Americans all the time; Russell Crowe, an Australian, plays Englishmen. Why is it any different if a Chinese portrays a Japanese, or vice versa? The only important question is: was the portrayal convincing?"

—Arthur Golden author of "Memoirs of a Geisha"

Ali Baba's thieves

"We drove away Ali Baba but the 40 thieves have taken over!"

—Balanga Bishop Socrates Villegas, criticizing the politician-beneficiaries of the People Power I and the low-key celebration prepared by the Arroyo administration

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Incorrigible destabilizers

I AM A SENIOR CITIZEN AND I have been in this world long enough to have observed the presidencies of Sergio Osmeña Sr., Manuel Roxas Sr., Elpidio Quirino, Ramon Magsaysay, Carlos Garcia and the others.

Frankly, I cannot understand why most Filipinos hate the present occupant of Malacañang. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is a gift for us from some place above. She is the best president the Philippines ever had and she alone is the "best person to lead the Philippines" at this time. She and the people around her are oozing with honesty, sincerity and transparency. Consider these pronouncements from them. (These may not rank side by side with Gospel verses, but they are real gems by themselves):

1. I will not run for reelection in 2004. (GMA)
2. I won the elections fair and square. (GMA)
3. One of these tapes is genuine; the other is fake. (Bunye)

4. I am telling the truth. (Garcilano)

5. Cha-cha is the cure-all for the ills of this country. (Members of the Symphony Orchestra that is composed of honorable congressmen, under the baton of GMA, with De Venecia at the piano and Ramos as the guest lead cello)

Against these unassailable truths, consider the utterances of these incorrigible destabilizers:

1. EO 464 makes GMA a quasi-dictator. (Joker Arroyo)
 2. Bolante is the master architect of the fertilizer scam and he is being protected by powerful people. (Ramon Magsaysay Jr.)
- Filipinos should not believe these destabilizers. Joker Arroyo is an irrelevant non-entity. His only claim to fame is his fighting oppression during all the martial law years and, later on, becoming notorious for not availing himself of the pork barrel as a legislator—a deplorable aberration for which he should be severely censured in the halls of Congress by the honor-

able congressmen.

As for Magsaysay, without a taint of scandal in his name (which goes against the grain of accepted conduct of government officials), he should be totally ignored. After all, he is just a son of a former president whose name and qualities are now obviously forgotten and whose popularity even at that time might not approach 10 percent of the current popularity of GMA.

We Filipinos should offer thanks for our blessings. We are lucky to have GMA with us at this time of our history. As Ninoy Aquino narrated in a speech (during the reign of the conjugal dictatorship), there was this Japanese who told him, "You Filipinos, are very lucky. You have a president who roves you, and a first lady who roves you even more."

—JESUS V. LANUZA,
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Las Piñas City
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MILITANT workers demonstrate against PP 1017.

REM ZAMORA

Ridiculous and shameful

THIS IS A REACTION TO THE news item, "Patikul killers lingered," of Julie Alipala. (PDI, 2/4/06)

In the movies, the authorities always come late when a crime happens. Some people laugh it off, but when it happens in real life and leads to deaths, it is not funny.

Last Feb. 3, in Liang Patikul, Sulu, more or less 200 meters from a Marine camp, around 20 men peppered civilian houses with bullets, killing six Muslims, including an 8-month-old girl.

The Marines came 15 minutes late. They said they couldn't get out of the camp because it is SOP for them not to proceed to a fire-fight if they "couldn't get the nature of the gunfire." The perpetrators left through a sitio only 150 meters away from another Marine detachment. And although the

Marines claimed they "responded quickly," not one of the killers was caught.

Sitio Liang is surrounded by military camps. How could 20 men, allegedly Abu Sayyaf members, have lingered around the area and avoided arrest? How could the Marines have hesitated to respond to the gunfire when they know that innocent lives were in peril?

There is no use encircling civilian communities with military detachments, equipped with high-powered guns and tanks, when these would not respond when they are most needed.

The military's excuse was not only lame. It was also ridiculous and shameful.

—COCOY TULAWIE,
vice president,
Suara Bangsamoro
Scott Road, Jolo, Sulu

Why GMA finds it hard to resign

MANY PEOPLE THESE DAYS ARE asking President Macapagal-Arroyo to resign. But she would not. *Kapit tuko kaya siya?* To me, it is not as simple as that. There are reasons why she wants to remain in power:

1. Personal security. Once she is out of power, criminal cases will be filed against her. Her abuse of power, her promises unfulfilled, the many scams under her administration—all this will haunt her like a ghost who refuses to go away. She will be haled to court and, for her, that is not a laughing matter.

2. Importunings of friends and hangers-on. Cabinet members, political and business allies, military proteges, criminal syndicates that are profiting from her government, all of them are against her

leaving office, obviously for millions of reasons.

3. The desire for more wealth and popularity. Being the President, she has the power to "give" out cash, property and position. This power she has exercised and abused when she used public funds to ensure her "win" in the last elections and to bribe congressmen to kill the impeachment complaints against her.

But her days are numbered. Like other corrupt dictators and rulers who used public money to remain in power, she too will face the awful judgment of history.

—REV. SALVADOR D. EDUARTE,
associate pastor,
United Church of Christ,
San Nicolas, Pangasinan 2447

1017 needed for economic takeoff

I'M WONDERING ABOUT THE restiveness in the military. I find it illogical for soldiers to demand the ouster of President Macapagal-Arroyo when their problems started way, way back. Even former President Fidel Ramos, a former general, was not able to solve their problems.

President Arroyo did right by issuing Proclamation 1017. Freedom of speech does not give anyone the license to hit below the belt. Some people demand truth but they do not bat an eyelash in using vicious language. The problem with the opposition members is they want to

unseat Ms Arroyo, but they offer the scary alternative of a transition council composed of contending personalities about whom many Filipinos know nothing. In this context, I don't see anything wrong with GMA's claim that she's the best leader at the moment.

As one of Filipinos dependent on the stability of the economy, I wish opinion makers would also see our point of view, and give Proclamation 1017 the chance to set things right, so that the country can finally take off economically.

—ANGIE DIAZ,
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Flickers of light leading to a new dawn

SOLITA MONSOD SPEAKS THE VOICE OF reason in her thoughts on the Edsa 1 celebration. (PDI, 2/25/06)

Edsa after all, is not about the big political figures who were there. It is about the ordinary Filipinos who proved themselves capable of rising above a problem and getting their act together to effect positive change.

We have rightfully become distrustful and skeptical of our political leaders. They have been an utter disappointment. But we have all the reasons to continue hoping and trusting in ourselves.

Our "small" everyday acts of justice, truthfulness, and compassion for our fellow Filipinos are like flickers of light in the darkness. In time, if we keep doing them, we shall see the dawn.

—JOANNA HERRERA,
joanne_herrera@msn.com

Lifestyle of materialism and greed

I FOUND THELMA SAN JUAN'S "IN A CANDLE-lit cave, under the stars" (PDI, 2/9/06) insensitive and appalling. How can someone talk about poverty in the first half of her article then talk about expensive food in the next? By doing so, she basically dismissed the tragedy—and even the poverty that led to that—as something unimportant.

Indeed, she proceeded to write about extravagant dishes like lobster thermidore that probably costs as much as a week's meal for a family whose mother probably lined up for the Wowwee event.

Sadly, all San Juan did was to make evident that the rich don't really care about the poor. As far as I've seen, Filipino lifestyle articles only breed materialism and greed. They trumpet simplicity few and far between. They mostly talk about cosmetics that cost more than a thousand pesos and dinners that cost a meager salary-earner's half-a-month's pay.

This culture of materialism is what led those people to queue up at the Phil Sports arena. It is what led the people to push and shove. It is what led the people to their death. And whatever one's assigned turf may be, this is something that we cannot dismiss just like that.

—PAULA FELICIANO,
pfceliciano@yahoo.com

VAT on pilfered electricity BIR's order

THIS REFERS TO THE LETTER, TITLED "Consumers pay VAT on pilfered electricity," of Bayan Muna Rep. Joel G. Virador. (2/13/06)

The Energy Regulatory Commission wishes to clarify that the imposition of value added tax (VAT) on the sale and distribution of electricity, as well as on other related electric services, is mandated by the Bureau of Internal Revenue pursuant to Revenue Memorandum Circular No. 61-2005 issued in October 2005. The ERC, the sole body authorized to fix electricity rates, issued a resolution for the orderly implementation of that memorandum. Among those covered by the resolution is the VAT on allowable system loss. However, the ERC made sure that the resolution would be in accordance with and in strict adherence to BIR circular.

Let it be emphasized that the BIR has clarified that what has been abolished by RA 9337 is the national franchise tax but not the local franchise tax. This BIR opinion is premised on the fact that what has been repealed or amended by RA 9337 is the national tax laws (NIRC) and not the local tax laws. The Local Government Code empowers local government units to impose tax on certain activities or services, like the services of electric franchisees, apart from the taxes being imposed by the national government.

It should be recalled that it was Congress

that passed RA 9337 amending the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) of 1997 which empowers the executive branch to impose additional taxes on the sale of electricity by generation, transmission and distribution companies. Since power rate hike is inevitable due to the passage of the new tax law, it is incumbent upon the ERC to see to it that only legitimate costs will be paid or passed on to the electricity consumers.

It is also Congress, through the enactment of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA), which paved the way for lifeline rate subsidy to the poorest of the poor ostensibly to alleviate their situation. It cannot be emphasized that the ERC is just implementing and performing the mandates of the law.

In coming up with the implementing guidelines on the imposition of the EVAT law for the power sector, the ERC has conducted two public consultations to apprise the public on the effect of that law on the rates of electricity. At the same time, ERC gave them the opportunity to raise their concerns over the same. It is worthy to note that representatives from the consumer groups and from the power providers were present during the public consultations.

—ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN,
commissioner/officer in charge,
Energy Regulatory Commission,
Pacific Center Bldg.,
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

A tragic blow on civil service

SOLITA MONSOD IN HER FEB. 11 COLUMN lamented the tragic blow dealt on civil service and the cause of good governance by the recent Civil Service Commission decision on the controversial transfer of Education Undersecretary Miguel Luz to the Department of Labor and Employment. Instead of upholding the right of a dedicated civil servant who stood by the principles of good governance and moral integrity, two CSC commissioners—J. Walde-mar Valmores and Cesar Buenaflor—ruled that the CSC had no jurisdiction over Luz's case and even if it had, it would still have decided against Luz since he had no security of tenure as he was not qualified to be undersecretary, and his reassignment was made in the interest of public service.

We find all the reasons given completely preposterous and in contradiction with what the CSC stands for. Why wouldn't the CSC have jurisdiction? What then is the CSC for? Luz doesn't have tenure? Luz is a career executive service officer (CESO) and thus cannot be terminated without cause. He was not qualified to be undersecretary? So was it just a lapse in judgment that he was appointed as undersecretary of the Department of Education? His

reassignment was made in the interest of public service? Really? Luz has been doing a great job in the DepEd. He has successfully instituted various reforms in the department, particularly in the textbook programs and procurement process. We, along with many other NGOs, laud his efforts in transforming the DepEd into a quality public service institution.

He was doing such a good job in the DepEd. Why transfer him? Whose interests are really at work here? Probably those of the few officials who got irked when he refused to honor the postdated checks worth P15 million that were to be used reportedly as payola for Rep. Antonio Diaz's pro-GMA vote in the impeachment proceedings.

The CSC decision disregarded completely the rights of dedicated public servants. It was a catastrophic blow on the civil service itself and on the very institution that it was supposed to uphold. Goodbye to good governance, indeed!

—ANNIE ENRIQUEZ-GERON,
general secretary,
Public Services Labor Independent
Confederation (PSLINK),
15 Clarion Lily St., Saint Dominic Subd.,
Congressional Avenue, Project 6, QC

The 'crime capital' of the Philippines

I WOULD LIKE TO CALL THE ATTENTION OF Manila Mayor Lito Atienza to crimes being committed with impunity in his area of jurisdiction. When my sister was still studying in De La Salle University, from year 2002-2005, I heard of so many snatching incidents and FX taxi hold-ups in Taft Avenue. The back light of my Tita's car was stolen in front of my grandmother's house on Bautista Street. A former schoolmate was killed on Quirino Avenue for refusing to surrender his cell phone to snatchers. The same thing happened to the nephew of Rep. Francis Escudero a few months ago on Arellano Street. And just last February, the mother of a friend was stabbed to death inside their residence also on Arellano Street.

I believe the proper authorities should help

the victims and their families get justice, not only by sending the criminals to jail but also by putting a stop to these crimes. I suggest higher police visibility especially in those areas.

Atienza's beautification projects, such as the parks, playgrounds, and decorative street lighting, are appreciated. But he must attend more seriously to the problem of rampant criminality.

He owes it to the taxpayers of Manila to give them peace of mind; he should make them feel secure in the city where they live. As for me, I want to erase the thought that the capital of the Philippines is actually the "crime capital" of the Philippines.

—ANDREW M. JIMENEZ,
a_jimenez@excite.com

Breathing life into Manila's barangays

IN CONNECTION WITH MAYOR LITO ATIENZA's "Buhayin ang Maynila" project, I would like to suggest that he rename Manila's barangays after flowers, plants, birds, animals, provinces, fish, etc.

In this manner, the good mayor can breathe life into an inanimate place like Barangay 217, Zone 25. We all know that numbers are "lifeless," in street lingo, "walang kabuhay-buhay."

Just imagine the beautiful audio effects of such names as Barangay Sanpangaita, Barangay Lagundi, Barangay Bulacan, Barangay Tanigue.

I sincerely hope Mayor Atienza can add the renaming of Manila's barangays into his endless list of "Buhayin ang Maynila" projects.

—PAUL R. MORTEL,
MBLA Court, Malanday,
Marikina City

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PERS GEN

LARRY ALCALA'S

APO NI ASIONG AKSAYA

by Boy Tan Togonon

LOLO I'M HOME!

KAMUSTA ANG SCHOOL MO APO?

OKAY NAMAN PO, TODAY WE LEARN A LOT FROM OUR TEACHER

IN FACT LOLO DAPAT MATUTUHAN MO RIN YUNG LESSON NAMIN

BAKIT AND BA ANG LESSON NINYO?

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Gov't pursuing peace talks—Dureza

COTABATO CITY—FORMAL PEACE TALKS between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) have not been postponed contrary to claims by some quarters, Presidential Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza said.

Earlier, MILF chief negotiator Mohagher Iqbal said Kuala Lumpur deferred the schedule of the talks because of the political problems hounding the Arroyo administration.

He said his group received the notice of postponement on Feb. 28.

But Dureza told the INQUIRER that Kuala Lumpur had not informed the government of any postponement, so it means the talks would go on this month.

"I talked to the panel and they told me that there was no communication from Malaysia regarding the postponement. The negotiations will continue," he said.

Iqbal maintained his claim. "When we talked about communi-

cation, we were not talking about formal notice like a letter. Maybe he (Dureza) was referring to a formal communication," Iqbal said.

The two panels were to discuss the implementing guidelines of the agreement on ancestral domain.

The resumption of the formal talks between the government and the MILF could pave the way for the resolution of the decades-old Moro rebellion.

Government negotiators and Malaysian officials believed that a peace agreement could be signed within six months after the resumption of the formal talks.

"We hope that by September, we will sign a peace agreement with the MILF," government chief negotiator Silvestre Afable had said earlier.

Asked what was in store for the MILF after the talks, Afable said: "It would be a powerful political

entity in which the Bangsamoro will be given all [local] powers, although it will still be under national laws and the Constitution."

He said it would be vested with absolute powers on revenue-generation and has rights to statutory income-sharing ratio with the national government from proceeds of exploitation of natural resources in MILF-claimed territories. **Jeffrey Maiten, PDI Mindanao Bureau**

S. Cotabato gov orders closure of small-scale mines

KORONADAL CITY—SOUTH COTABATO GOV. Daisy Avance-Fuentes has ordered the closure of small-scale mining operations in a remote village in T'boli town after environment officials found signs of possible landslides.

Local government officials have also relocated about 500 families or about 3,000 persons after the Mines and Geosciences Bureau found cracks and small landslides in the area.

A report from the MGB showed that beneath Barangay Kimatu are about 100 mining tunnels, making soil collapse, landslides and similar occurrences very possible.

Fuentes gave provincial environment officials at least a week to submit a report for action.

The closure of small-scale mining would affect about 2,000 workers, mostly natives, according to the Church-run radio dxOM-FM.

MGB regional director Jose Madrona has alerted local disaster management councils in the region to institute measures for possible natural disasters, such as flash floods and landslides.

Following the Southern Leyte landslide tragedy, officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources conducted a geological hazard mapping in the region.

Central Mindanao covers the provinces of South Cotabato, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Sarangani, and the cities of Koronadal, General Santos, Cotabato, Kidapawan and Tacurong.

In an advisory sent to local governments in the region, the MGB said the villages and residential areas near Banga, Pulangi, Mal-Mar and Allah Valley Rivers that drain toward the Rio Grande de Mindanao were most vulnerable to flooding.

Identified as flood-prone areas were Cotabato City and the towns of Alamada, Libungan, Pigawayan, M'lang and Kabacan in North Cotabato.

The MGB earlier identified the towns of Isulan, Lutayan, Ninoy Aquino in Sultan Kudarat as areas prone to flooding after two or three days of continuous rains.

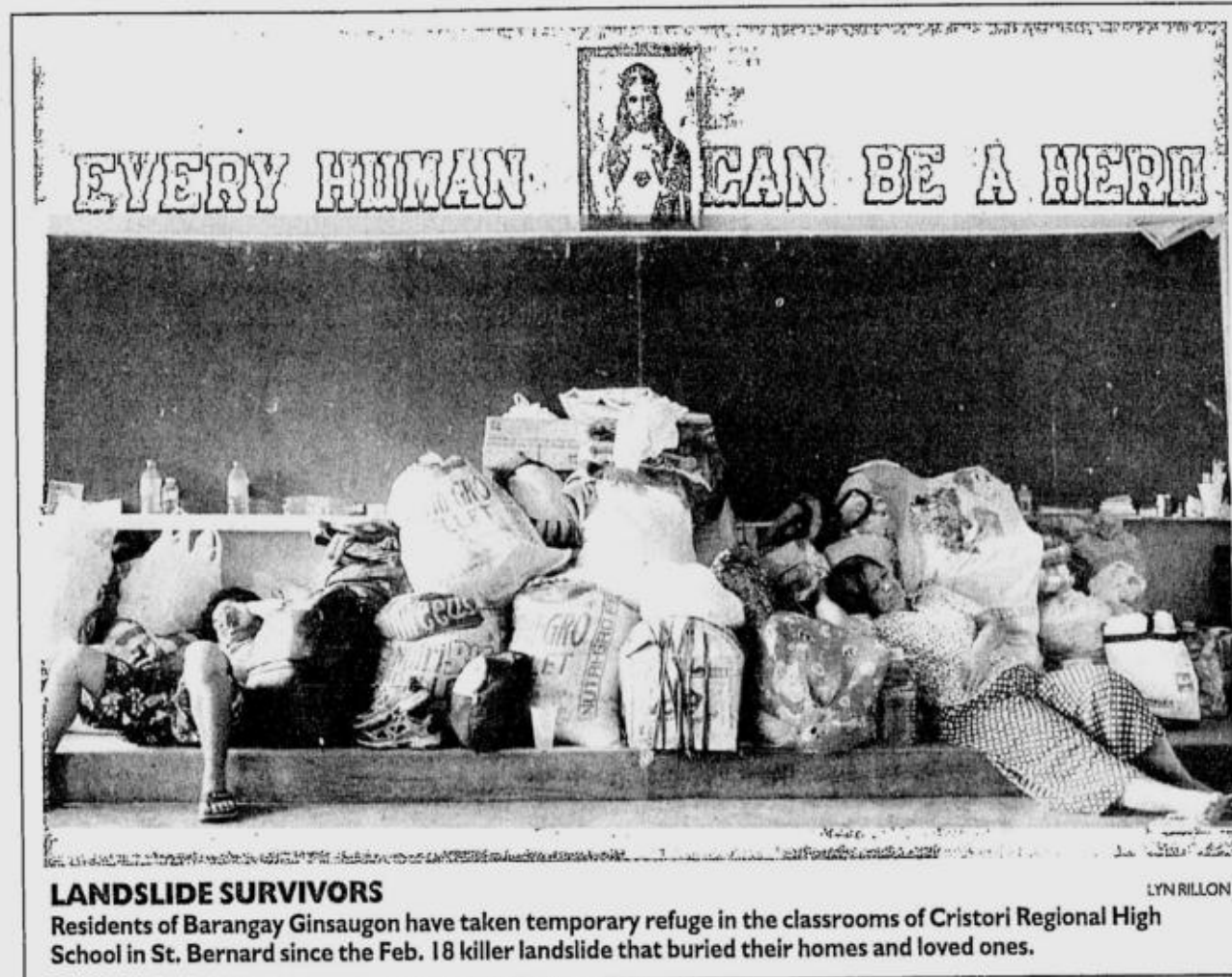
Listed as landslide or danger zones by the DENR are the towns of Glan and Malungon in Sarangani, and Lake Sebu, Tupi, Polomolok and T'boli in South Cotabato.

Local government units have been advised to institute measures to keep residents safe from disasters.

North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol has urged local officials to activate disaster management councils to ensure the people's safety.

Piñol and Cotabato Mayor Muslimin Sema have separately urged loggers to put an end to environmental destruction.

Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau



LANDSLIDE SURVIVORS

Residents of Barangay Ginsaugon have taken temporary refuge in the classrooms of Cristori Regional High School in St. Bernard since the Feb. 18 killer landslide that buried their homes and loved ones.

LYN RILLON

Protests swamp Benguet on dog trade

By Delmar Cariño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—LETTERS from abroad protesting a proposal to legalize dog meat trade here are clogging the provincial government's mailbox.

The letters, mostly from Europe, have expressed horror over the proposed ordinance to make the commercial sale of dog meat legal. They called the move sadistic and cruel to both man and dogs.

The senders asked Gov. Borromeo Melchor to junk the proposal. The governor, however, declined to comment and instead asked the provincial board to act on the letters.

Vice Gov. Crescencio Pacalso said the letters were misplaced since "the provincial board never passed or intended to enact an ordinance or resolution allowing the sale of dog meat."

As of March 3, the province had received 369 letters, mostly from Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Sweden,

Germany, New Zealand and France.

Twenty-five of the letters were written in German and French, while a letter from Gil Thacker of Staffordshire, England, bore a poem adoring his pet dog "Bonnie."

Marie Louise Henriksdottir, a Swedish senior translator, said the proposal had upset 8,000 dog owners in their country.

Jeanne Gumo, a teacher at Long Island, New York, said "the world would be watching" for any attempt to amend the Philippines' animal welfare law.

Anneise Smillie, director of the Animals Asia Foundation, said "tradition can never be an excuse for cruelty and cultural relativism is a poor argument for maintaining the merciless practice" of eating dog meat.

Pacalso noted that the letters had the same content. Most of the authors admitted to being members of or had learned about the issue from the Animals Asia Foundation.

He said a global campaign

could have started the lobby asking the Benguet provincial government to desist from legalizing the dog trade.

The provincial board passed a resolution in November last year to remind the Department of Agriculture and law enforcement agencies that the rights of indigenous peoples to butcher animals for ritual practices had been incorporated in the Animal Welfare Act (Republic Act 8485).

Pacalso said the resolution had acknowledged that dog trade and dog meat-eating had become commercialized in the Cordillera.

"But we never said we would legalize the trade," he said. "We passed the resolution to remind law enforcers that before they conduct raids on restaurants that sell dog meat, they should coordinate first with the DA's animal welfare committee."

He said that although the province has been known for its dog meat trade, the local government would never pass an ordinance to legalize the practice.

Gov't identifies landslide-prone areas in Bohol

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—THE MINES AND GEOSCIENCES Bureau in Central Visayas (MGB-7) has identified at least five areas that are considered prone to landslides in Bohol.

A three-page report prepared by Renato Villaber, deputy head of the Mineral Resource Management Sector of the Bohol Environment Management Office (Bemo) identified only two of the areas—Barangay Candag, Loboc town and Barangay Mayana in Jagna.

The rest were only described as situated in the towns of Duero, Guindulman and Anda.

The Bemo report, which was submitted to Gov. Erico Aumentado, said the five areas were considered "prone to landslides, subsidence and slope failure."

The Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Penro) has also identified certain areas as landslide-prone.

Aside from the two barangays identified by MGB-7, Penro Arius Ilano named Barangay Candabong in Anda town.

He said other areas in the towns of Pilar, Guindulman, Sierra-Bullones, Garcia-Hernandez and Valencia were "vulnerable to ground collapse."

These areas have limestone formations with sink holes, which are vulnerable to landslides, Ilano told local reporters.

He warned that heavy downpour could trigger landslides when "binding properties" in the soil loosened up.

He noted that excessive withdrawal of water from aquifers could provoke ground failures that could be aggravated by gravity.

Ground cracks had earlier been reported in Candag in Loboc and Bugsoc in Sierra-Bullones. Some properties had been damaged.

A portion of Barangay Mayuga in Guindulman also collapsed but no sizable damage was reported.

In Barangay Lundag, Pilar, road cracks were noted after last week's heavy downpour.

Retired Col. Jacinto Piquero, executive officer of the Provincial Disaster and Coordinating Council, said the cracks were about 20 meters deep.

These had been reported to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Provincial Engineer's Office for appropriate action, Piquero said.

He also disclosed that people living within a 50-meter radius had been advised to move to safe places.

ROUNDUP

Marine exec reminds troops of 3-point guidance

MARAWI CITY—MARINE COMMANDER Brig. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino asked soldiers to be discerning about orders handed down by their senior officers to avoid being led astray.

"Each Marine is only duty-bound to obey the lawful order of your seniors," Dolorfino said during the turn-over ceremonies here on Wednesday.

"Even if I order you to march to Edsa, do not follow me," Dolorfino said.

Dolorfino supervises the 1st and 2nd Marine brigades based in the Lanao provinces.

The 1st MB based here used to

be under the command of Col. Ariel Querubin, who figured in a six-hour standoff in Fort Bonifacio on Feb. 26.

Querubin was succeeded by Lt. Col. Luisito Marcelino.

Dolorfino said the Marines should follow a three-point "guidance in light of recent developments involving the military."

The "guidance" consisted of reminders to uphold loyalty to the flag and the Constitution, adherence to the chain of command, and the need to steer clear of partisan politics.

"We shall always be committed to [our] duty as protector of the

people and the State so that people will have an institution to lean on in times of trouble in the country," Dolorfino said.

In underlining the need for soldiers to "insulate ourselves from partisan political activities," he said "politics always divide people."

He acknowledged that differences in political stance are unavoidable among individuals, but said: "United we pursue our Constitutional mandate, divided we pursue our individual political convictions."

He explained that when soldiers side with one political group,

they are only "protecting a small segment of the population."

"How about those in the other side of the political spectrum? How about those in the silent majority?" Dolorfino said.

He said if Marine soldiers could not distance themselves from politics, then they should resign so the organization would not be dragged into their activities.

"Let us shed our uniforms ... in order not to drag the name of our beloved organization into our own political actions," he said.

Ryan Rosaura, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Cops oppose drawing salaries from ATMs

SORSOGON CITY—POLICE PERSONNEL in Sorsogon province are opposing plans by Camp Crame officials to source their salaries and other financial benefits through the banks' automated teller machines (ATMs).

Such move would put them in grave danger and make it difficult for them to get their salaries, they said.

The policemen were reacting to a

memorandum sent to the Sorsogon provincial police asking which branch of the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) the police personnel preferred to draw their salaries from.

Camp Crame had apparently contracted the LBP for the program.

A police officer, who requested not to be named, said withdrawing salaries from ATMs would require police personnel in far-flung municipalities to travel to

the city just to get their pay.

"Imagine the danger they get exposed to during their travel. And the fact that they could not just leave their posts would mean delays in their benefits," he stressed.

"Our policemen will be like sitting ducks in the eyes of NPA snipers while traveling regularly," the officer explained.

A police officer said the program should be made optional.

Only the towns of Bulan and Irosin and Sorsogon City had LBP branches, he said.

In a survey conducted by the SPPO, only about three percent of all the police personnel favored the use of ATM.

Bicol police director Chief Supt. Victor Boco assured his men that he would relay their concerns to higher authorities. **Bobby Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau**

I killed in Davao flash flood

DAVAO CITY—An unidentified man was killed while at least 200 families had to move to safe grounds when flash floods hit several villages here on Sunday, disaster officials said. Carmelito Lupo, chief of the Office of the Civil Defense (OCD) in Southern Mindanao, said about 200 families in Barangay Carmen in Baguio District evacuated after rivers started to rise at dawn and flood their homes. Flooding also hit nearby villages in Tugbok District, according to the Davao City Disaster Coordinating Council. Lupo said the families returned to their homes when the flood subsided a few hours later. The OCD also recommended the immediate evacuation of 168 families in Sitio, Ugbo, Barangay Tuboan in Taragona, Davao Oriental for fear of a landslide.

Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Village chief, 2 others slain in ambush

COTABATO CITY—A village chieftain and two other persons were killed in an ambush in a secluded village here on Saturday. Mayor Muslimin Sema said Khoy Tahir, barangay chair of Tamontaka 4, was driving a motorcycle with two of his relatives, Samad Budo and Abu Yusoph, on board, when they were attacked at around 10:30 a.m. City police chief Senior Supt. Abubakar Mangalen said one of the suspects, a certain Ben Taha, immediately surrendered to police with the help of Kabuntalan officials. Mangalen said Taha and some of his relatives were after Budo, whom they suspected to have killed Taha's brother some 20 years ago.

Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Bulacan village head shot dead

SAN MIGUEL, Bulacan—Armed men on Thursday gunned down a village chief, the third to be killed in this town in two months, police said. Jessie Velayo, head of Barangay Lambakin here, was parking his jeep at 7 a.m. when he was shot and killed by a group of unidentified men, police said. Velayo ran but lost in the town's vice mayoral race in the 2004 elections. His friend, Alex de Leon, a former barangay chair of San Jose, was killed in an ambush on Dec. 31 last year. The killing came a year after he was acquitted of murder charges for his alleged involvement in the killing of San Miguel Vice Mayor Manuel Dantis before the 1998 elections.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Pacquiao et al. delay flight...

From page A1

stead, he sent a lawyer to work out a settlement.

An airport source told the INQUIRER that Pacquiao, his wife Jinkee and two sons arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Centennial Terminal four minutes before their flight's scheduled departure at 8:10 a.m., delaying it by another four minutes.

"Despite the time, Pacquiao simply sauntered into the airport with his family in tow. He wasn't in a hurry at all, considering that he was already very late," said the source, who requested anonymity because the airline had yet to make an official report on the incident.

"Inis na inis yung mga taga-PAL at immigration (PAL and immigration staff were very annoyed)," said the source.

Champ didn't smile

An eyewitness said Pacquiao, who was wearing a striped long-sleeved shirt and denims,

looked "serious" and did not smile at the people around him.

Immigration officers had to "fast-track some immigration procedures" to accommodate Pacquiao and his family in the business class section of a fully booked PAL flight PR 300.

"This incident got a lot of people thinking if all the fame and adulation heaped on Pacquiao had already gotten to his head," the source said.

Aide fell on his butt

The incident was aggravated by the behavior of a certain Bernard Cloma, a member of Pacquiao's entourage of some 20 people who introduced himself as a "producer," the source said.

Cloma reportedly argued with the PAL customer service agent who informed him that check-in counters for the flight had to close at 7:45 a.m. according to airline regulations.

The agent also suggested that Pacquiao and his family take the 10 a.m. flight to Hong Kong instead.

"(Cloma) said it was not possible. He even dropped the name of (PAL owner) Lucio Tan, saying that he (Cloma) was the one who invited one of Tan's children to be a judge in a prestigious beauty contest," the source said.

Pacquiao, his wife and sons, Cloma and three other people in his entourage were the last eight persons to board PR 300.

The source said the group was in such a hurry to get on the flight that Cloma slipped and fell on his behind at the boarding gate, to the amusement of the people watching.

Pacquiao knocked out Mexico's Erik Morales in January in a scintillating win that earned him the adulation of the entire nation and a record multimillion-peso deal as an endorser of San Miguel Corp. products.

Lover takes swing

He was immediately hit by a scandal.

Joanne Rose Bacosa, who claimed she had an affair with

Pacquiao for two years, appeared at yesterday's hearing at the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office, demanding support for her child who she insisted was the boxing champion's son.

The 24-year-old Bacosa is seeking a dollar trust fund for the boy equivalent to P25 million, a P2.5-million house, a P75,000 monthly allowance with retroactive effect, and education and medical expenses, said a lawyer, who requested anonymity because of his involvement in the litigation.

Bacosa also demanded use of Pacquiao's name for the child, to ensure his legitimacy and future rights, and P1 million in litigation costs.

"We are open to a possible settlement when the time comes," Pacquiao's lawyer, Jose Crisostomo, told reporters after the 45-minute private hearing.

Bacosa smiled to reporters when she came out but did not talk to them. *With a report from Nancy Carvajal*

Women rule House, but only for a day

From page A1

cused of rebellion by officials of the Arroyo administration.

Irony

The irony of the observance of the monthlong celebration, which officially starts tomorrow—March 8, International Women's Day—was not lost on Maza who wore a cream terno with a barb-wire accent made of black fabric around her waist.

"This is to symbolize this woman-led regime's violations of women's rights," said Maza, stressing that nothing had been done in the past six years to uphold the essence of the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

The international accord binds governments to ensure that women have equal access and opportunities in both political and public life.

"One cannot pretend to uphold this international convention while gagging members of the press and disallowing protests," said Maza.

Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia Villar, leader of Women's Legislators in the House, put it more succinctly: "It's ironic that we're celebrating Women's Month while our colleague, Representative Maza, cannot even get out of the House of Representatives."

Villar feared for Maza's safety as the latter was scheduled last night to go to the Senate after the session to attend the bicameral conference on the disagreeing provisions of the juvenile justice system bill.

Vital women's legislation

"I'm afraid for her. Once darkness falls, she might be arrested [on her way to the Senate]. She told me that she would want to be accompanied by the media," said Villar.

The women's bloc hopes to pass three vital pieces of legislation this year—the Magna Carta for Women, the Juvenile Justice System Act and the Population Management Bill.

In the preceding 12th Congress, women legislators succeeded in steering through the enactment of the laws on Anti-Trafficking of (and Anti-Violence on) Women and Children, Protection of Children in the Workforce, and the Expanded Senior Citizen's Act.

Quezon City Rep. Nanette Castelo-Daza said she expected the magna carta to be approved on the third reading last night.

"It's already been approved in principle," said Daza, who believed that Filipino women continued to be the "freest in Asia."

Women outnumber men

"There is a definite trend to encourage women to participate in the political life of the country," said Villar, stressing that other salient points of the magna carta included the establishment of livelihood centers for women, crisis centers in every town and a comprehensive medical health service.

She lamented that women legislators accounted for 18 percent of the House membership although Filipino women comprised more than 51 percent of the population. In fact, women representation in the House went down from 42 to 37 in the last two congresses, she said.

Villar stressed that the government "had nothing to do with it. It's us [who should] do something about it in the long term. It's a long process."

Akbayan party-list Rep. Risa Hontiveros added: "The women of this country would not be afraid to fight another dictatorship."

Proficiency of high school seniors in Filipino declines

From page A1

DepEd officer in charge Fe Hidalgo said yesterday.

Before 2005, the last time Filipino was included in the National Secondary Achievement Test (NSAT), the NAT's old name, was in 2001.

A score of 75 percent and above in any subject means a student has reached "mastery" level in that subject. A score of 50-75 percent means "near mastery" level, while a score of below 50 percent is considered "below mastery" level.

Hidalgo said the decline could be due to three factors—the focus on English, science and mathematics by the education department, large classroom sizes and the lack of good materials.

"We were really surprised. These (NAT) numbers never went

down significantly in the past. Maybe because it (Filipino) has been neglected," she said.

To arrest the drop, Hidalgo has ordered the DepEd's Bureau of Secondary Education to "review and simplify" the Filipino curriculum.

Training of teachers

Hidalgo said the department would use the coming summer break to train teachers in Filipino and the core subjects.

In last year's Educators' Congress in Davao City, the DepEd said it would focus its programs on English, science and mathematics. This was prompted by findings of a recent study that the teachers' lack of training in teaching the three subjects had affected the learning skills of the students in these areas.

The study also revealed that

more than half of public school teachers nationwide had little college training in the subjects they taught.

Only 25 percent of math and science teachers actually trained in their respective areas of instruction, it said.

NAT today

Today, some 1.8 million Grade 6 students in public elementary schools around the country are scheduled to take the NAT.

Hidalgo said the test would determine the competencies acquired by Grade 6 students in English, science and math under their regular curriculum and under the department's Bridge Program.

Failing the exam does not mean the student will be disqualified from entering high school, according to Hidalgo. She said the test results would account for

only 25 percent of a student's overall grade.

The Bridge Program, on its second year of implementation, is an enrichment and development program for students lagging in English, science and math.

The DepEd's testing arm, the National Education Testing and Research Center, will administer the NAT with the assistance of secondary school officials.

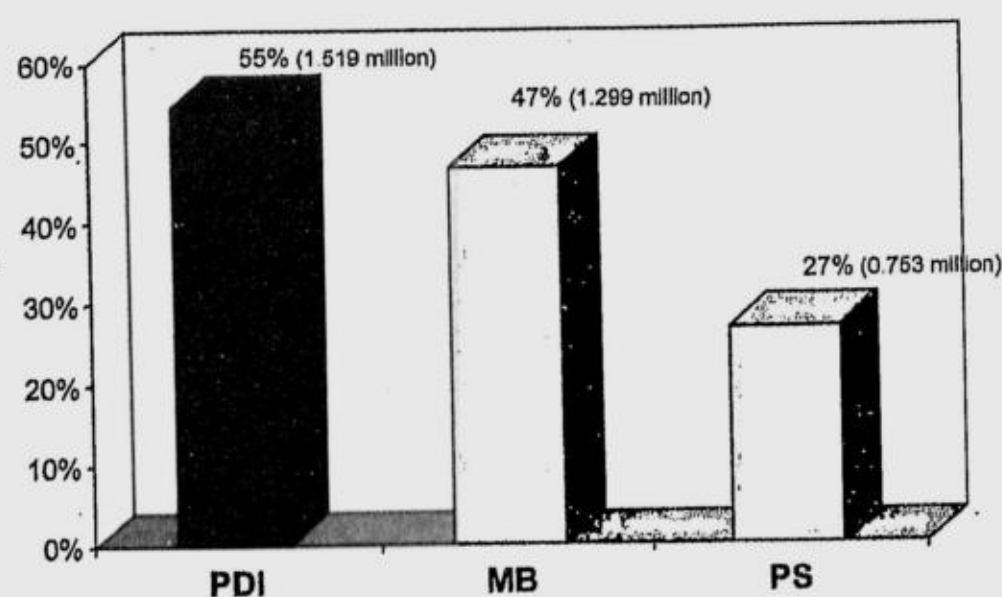
All public elementary schools will serve as testing centers. Every testing room will accommodate only 30 students.

Elementary school teachers from another school division will serve as examiners.

Results of the tests are expected to be released after six weeks.

The names of students who fail the achievement test will not be released publicly to avoid embarrassment.

Who is Mr. Nielsen, and why won't other newspapers carry his story?



Base: Broadsheet readers (read yesterday), nationwide
Source: Nationwide Media Index 2004

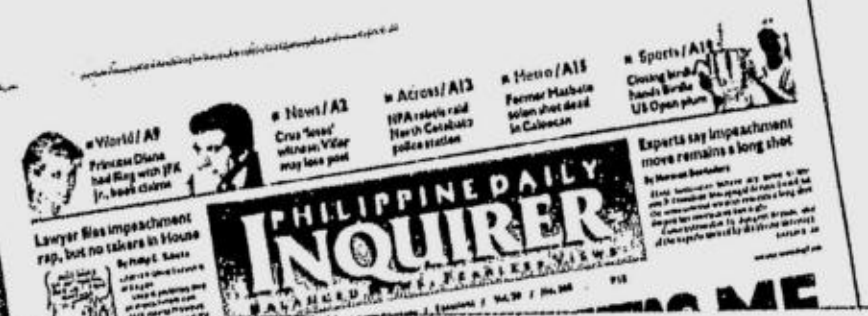
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MEGALOTTO 6/45

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Hazing victim's family wants killers nailed

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE FAMILY OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY of the Philippines-Manila student who died last Friday after undergoing a hazing ritual yesterday vowed to seek justice for his death.

"All we want is justice, even if we have to spend for it. I am not asking for another life as payment, only the corresponding penalty for those who killed him, what is provided for in law," said Renelyn, the sister of 18-year-old Clark Anson Silverio.

Silverio, a mechanical engineering student, was rushed unconscious to the Manila Sanitarium Hospital in Pasay City last Friday after undergoing what the police said were initiation rites in a warehouse on Guatemala Street, Barangay San Isidro in Makati City.

Doctors had declared him dead on arrival at the hospital.

Based on initial investigation, he had sustained severe hematoma and bruises around his thighs.

The Makati police said the teenager was a victim of hazing, but they have yet to deter-

mine the name of the fraternity he had joined.

They have taken into custody Edmar Gipan, another TUP student, who was one of those who had rushed Silverio to the hospital. Gipan reportedly tried to leave the hospital when told that the victim had died, prompting the security guards to detain him.

"I don't know what happened, if he was recruited, forced, or had volunteered to join (the fraternity). Whatever the reason, I accept that. I have also accepted that he's already gone. What I can't accept is the reason why he died. He was too young, he was an achiever, and he had so much ambition," Renelyn told the INQUIRER in an interview at the Makati Central Police Station yesterday.

She said that Silverio, the third child in a brood of six, was deeply religious, and an achiever in school.

"He was a consistent honor student. As his classmates always said, if nobody else could answer a math question, he'd know the right answer," Renelyn said.

She proudly recalled that her brother was given a Presidential medal for academic achievement upon his graduation from high

school at the San Jose Adventist Academy in Mindoro.

Renelyn said her brother had not told her that he would be joining any organization in school.

"I didn't know about it, that's why the family was surprised," she added.

Senior Insp. Gary Reyes, Makati Police Department Criminal Investigation Division chief, said that investigators were interviewing witnesses, including other TUP students, who also underwent initiation rites last Friday.

"They could serve as our witnesses, because they are the ones that survived. We also have to establish how the group of students was able to get permission to use the warehouse for their activity, and then we will establish whether the owners of the warehouse could be held liable," Reyes told the INQUIRER.

He said those who participated in the hazing ritual or conspired to hold the initiation rites may face charges for violating the anti-hazing law.

Silverio's family yesterday brought his body home to San Jose, Mindoro, where he will be buried.

Anti-crime watchdog seeks prison probe

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE VOLUNTEERS AGAINST Crime and Corruption (VACC) has asked the Department of Justice (DOJ) to replace New Bilibid Prisons (NBP) Director Vicente Vinarao for failing to stop several violent incidents inside the prison compound.

"It is just proper for the DOJ now to investigate the heinous crimes happening inside the jail. It seems that they (jail officials) no longer have a hold on the firearms, bladed weapons and illegal drugs inside the jail," VACC chair Dante Jimenez told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Last Saturday, murder convict Claudio Teehankee Jr. was stabbed inside the NBP compound by an inmate. He was brought to the Asian Hospital in Alabang for treatment.

Three months ago, Airman First Class Cordova G. Estelo, one of the 16 soldiers convict-

ed for the Aquino-Galman double murder case, was stabbed dead by another inmate.

"There are still many cases of violence and illegal drug activities happening inside that have not reached the media. We have been receiving a lot of information regarding such incidents," Jimenez said.

He stressed that inmates like Teehankee, who are confined in the maximum compound, need to serve the sentence meted out to them, and not die because of violence in the jail.

The VACC official added that Vinarao no longer seemed capable of curbing violence inside the jail, "that's why we are asking the DOJ to relieve him or if not, place him on preventive suspension."

In a letter sent to the DOJ, Jimenez stressed that the NBP needed a more dynamic and aggressive leadership in order to stop the string of violent incidents inside the jail.

Sexual harassment at DOJ: the plot thickens

REMEMBER THE WOMAN PROSECUTOR who complained of sexual harassment against a fellow prosecutor?

Prosecutor II Olivia V. Non has filed a formal complaint against Prosecuting Attorney Alexander Q. Suarez with the Manila Prosecutor's Office.

The cases she filed against Suarez were for acts of lasciviousness and "other related cases."

She has filed a complaint of sexual harassment before the Supreme Court's Office of the Bar Confidant. She's also asking that Suarez be disbarred for grave misconduct.

In her complaint with the Bar Confidant, Non, who occupies a higher position than Suarez, said he mashed her right within the Department of Justice compound. Non's complaint against Suarez developed a twist when Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Richard Anthony Fadullon, along with other top DOJ officials, interceded in Suarez's behalf.

Fadullon asked Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to stay Suarez's assignment to Tarlac City while the case against him is being heard. Suarez was assigned to Metro Manila, where he reportedly received an allowance.

Fadullon allegedly accused columnist and broadcaster Tony Calvento of meddling and interceding in cases filed with the DOJ.

He suspected Calvento of having prodded Non to file the sexual harassment case against Suarez.

Both Calvento and Non are Secretary Gonzalez's co-hosts in his radio program, "Hustisya Para sa Lahat (Justice for All)," aired every Saturday on dwlZ.

Calvento said that the cases he

interceded with at the DOJ were referred by my radio-TV program, "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo" to the DOJ.

One was a rape case filed against a Marinduque town mayor or by a minor; the other was a case for acts of lasciviousness filed against a Mindoro Oriental prosecutor (now retired).

Calvento was then my director of "Isumbong" for television. The program's guiding principle is to follow up cases we helped file with concerned government agencies. Calvento was then merely asking after those cases upon my request.

From a simple sexual harassment, the plot has thickened into a telenovela-type drama. The only thing lacking is romance, or is there?

BULACAN Assistant Prosecutor Eduardo dela Cruz has dismissed a rape case filed against Christopher "Estong" Corpus, a barangay kagawad of Poblacion, Baliwag, Bulacan.

The respondent belongs to a wealthy family, while the complainant is poor.

Dela Cruz said there was no rape because the complainant and respondent were dating at the time.

Dela Cruz did not consider the victim's psychological profile. The complainant, according to the NBI Neuro-Psychiatric Service, is a mental retardate. Although she is 21 years old, she has the mind of a seven-year-old child.

There were probably hundreds of thousands of reasons for Dela Cruz's dismissal of the rape case.

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo



7 suspected drug pushers nabbed in Taguig

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A MAN WHO CLAIMED TO BE A RELATIVE of Sen. Lito Lapid was arrested yesterday in Taguig City for drug pushing.

Carlos Lapid was arrested along with six other persons who were caught allegedly using methamphetamine chloride, more popularly known as shabu, inside his house at Sitio 3, Zone 7, Barangay Western Bicutan. The

other suspects were identified as Moises Baisac, Ricardo Baisac, Alex Dima, Ryan Sanama, Michael Ramos and Paul Rodriguez.

Councilor Henry Duenas, head of the city's Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operation Task Force, said Lapid's shanty had a concealed opening leading to two rooms where pot sessions were held.

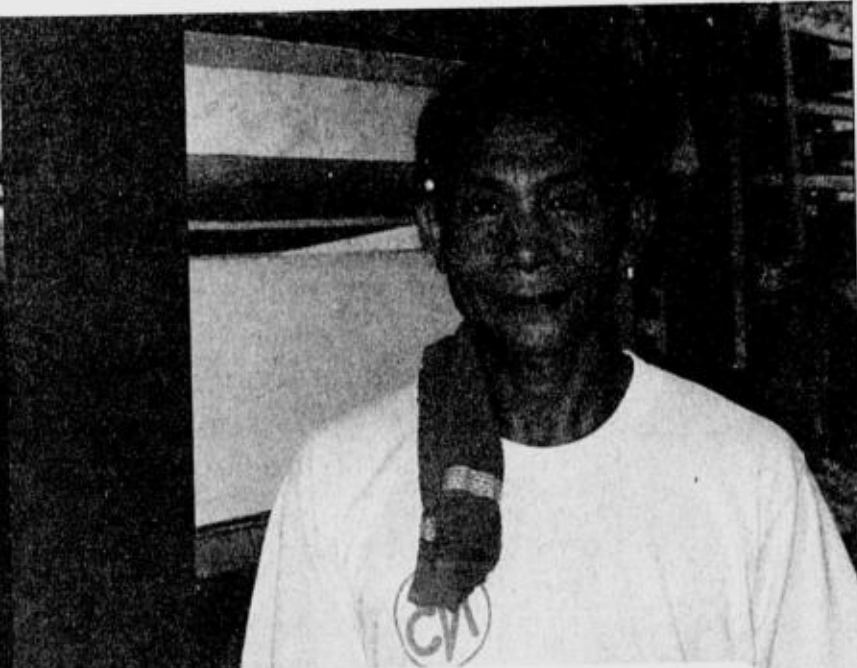
"Based on the information we gathered, drug users paid a P10 fee each for using the

rooms," Duenas told the INQUIRER.

Senior Insp. Eufonio Obong Jr., the head of the city's Drug Enforcement Unit, said they conducted the raid after receiving complaints from Lapid's neighbors about his alleged involvement in the drug trade.

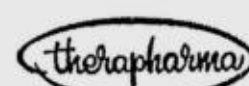
Obong said they seized eight sachets of shabu, several lighters, tooters, pipes and other drug paraphernalia and a shotgun from the suspects.

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METROBRIEFS

4 Pasay gov't employees in trouble



CHARGES will be filed against four Pasay City Hall employees who allegedly conspired to defraud the local government of P2.5 million. The four were identified as Carlito Santy from the Office of the City Administrator, Grace Vasco, a computer operator with the Personnel Department; Jocelyn Castro from the City Treasury and Jonas Constantino of the Pasay City General Hospital (PCGH). Investigation showed that the four had drawn up a list of 12 ghost employees who, based on payroll documents, had received a total of P2.5 million in salaries since June 2005. The 12 were listed as medical officers of PCGH. A check, however, with Dr. Leto Mangonon, PCGH chief, revealed that the 12 were ghost employees. Worse, the four suspects forged Mangonon's signature to ensure that the supposed employees were paid regularly.

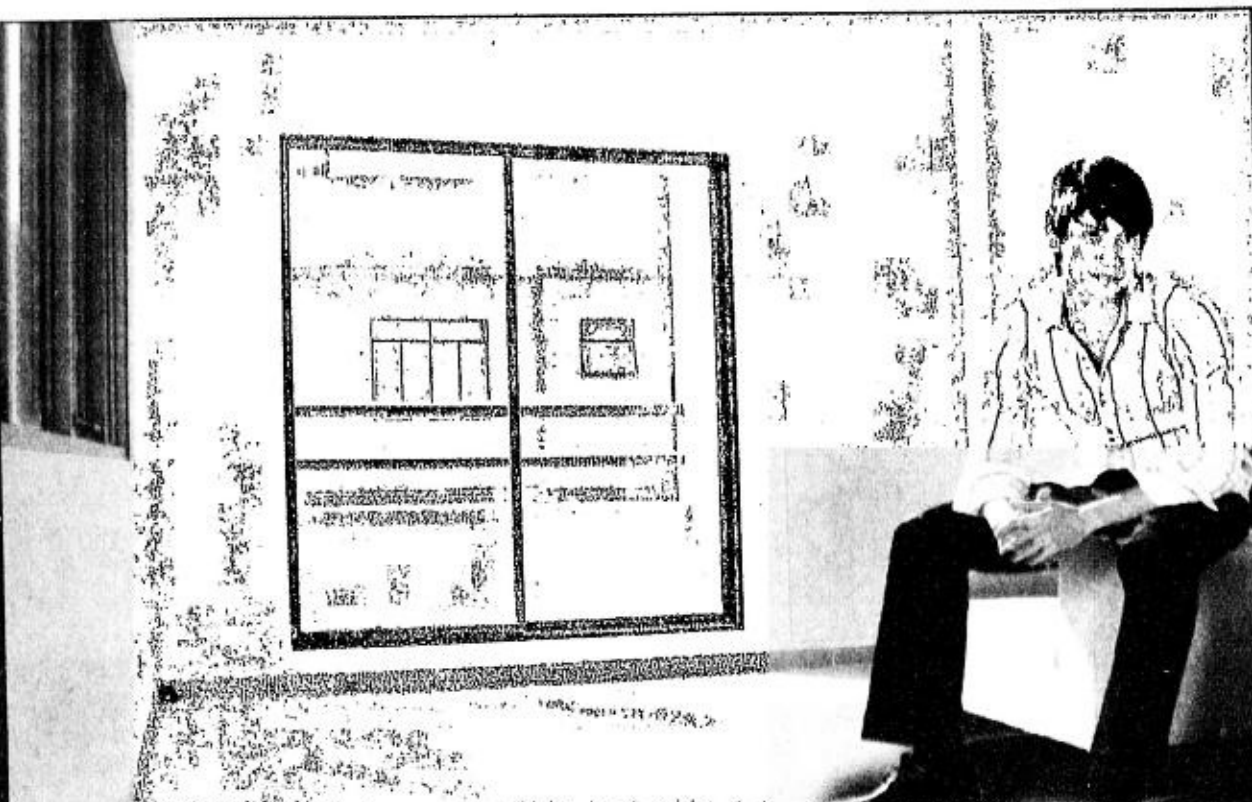
Jocelyn R. Uy

Rude welcome for ex-Baguiyo mayor, wife

THIEVES broke into the house of a former Baguio City mayor in Las Piñas City and took over P2 million worth of valuables. Ramon Labo, 71, of Manuela Subdivision in Barangay Pamplona 3, told the police that he and his wife discovered the theft at around 7 p.m. Sunday after arriving from Baguio City. P02 Ariel Gupana said in his report that the thieves took a laptop, a Rado watch, a digital camera, a cellphone and a platinum ring which were worth P2.19 million. The robbers had entered the house by breaking a window in the couple's bedroom. The police are now looking for the couple's house boy, Jayson Gomez, whom they have not seen since Sunday night. Gomez's things were also missing.

Jocelyn R. Uy

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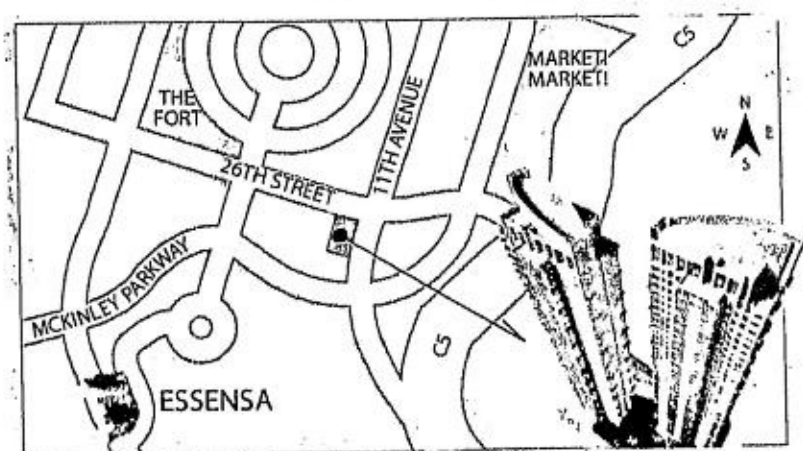
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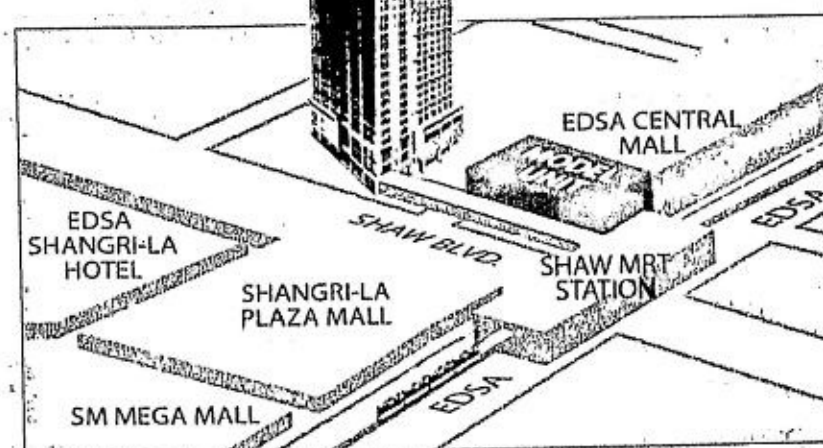


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Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres



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■ Bryant centerpiece
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backs
Olympic
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RP cagers find work in Indonesia



COCA-COLA'S Rafi Reavis grabs the rebound off Air21's Mark Telan (left) and Homer Se in Sunday's game won by the Tigers, 104-83.

RYAN LIM

See action as imports to boost Jakarta league

By June Navarro

THIS IS ONE GAUGE OF THE REVERED STATUS of Philippine basketball in Southeast Asia.

The Indonesian Basketball League are tapping former Philippine Basketball Association players and aspirants as imports in the same manner that Asia's first play-for-pay league attracts reinforcements from the United States.

Scheduled the entire month, the 2006 IBL first conference has signed up ex-pros Ernesto Ballesteros, Allan Salangsang, Jolly Escobar, Peter Naron and Michael Orquillas to prop up the level of competition in the Indonesian professional cage series.

Sports agent Ed Ponceja said that amateurs Paul Reguerra and Nicole Uy of San Sebastian College, Dominador Javier of University of Perpetual Help-Dalta System, little-known Ronnie Zagala and Robbie Angeles will join the ex-pros to reinforce the 10 teams in the IBL.

"Apart from the financial benefits, this is a stepping stone for them to get another crack in the PBA," said Ponceja, who has been facilitating the dispersal of the

Filipino dribblers in the IBL.

Last year, Rency Bajar copped the Best Import award after leading Bhineka Sritex Solo to its first championship in the 2005 IBL reinforced conference.

Bajar, who skipped one conference in the PBA after Shell decided to disband, is now playing with the Alaska Aces in the ongoing PBA Philippine Cup.

Aside from Bhineka Sritex Solo, other teams competing in the IBL are Satria Muda Jakarta, Aspac Jakarta, Kalila Jakarta, Indonesia Muda Jakarta, Citra Satria Jakarta, CLS Surabaya, Ang Sapura Sania Medan, Avia Bimasakti Malang and Panasia Bandung, which is coached by former national mentor Boysie Zamar.

Talk 'N Text assistant coach Bong Ramos was a fixture in Indonesian basketball after calling the shots for its national team in the Southeast Asian Games and a couple of overseas tournaments.

Ramos led Aspac Jakarta to a grand slam before coaching the FedEx Express, now Air21, in the PBA last season.

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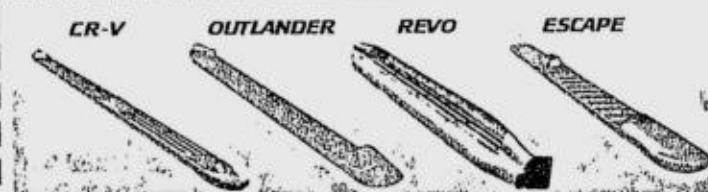
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Mustangs post breakthrough win in NSBC caging

LEGAZPI CITY—WEST NEGROS COLLEGE rolled back defending champion Perpetual Help of Rizal-Dalta System, 56-53, Sunday and became the first West Visayan team to win the 60th National Students Basketball Championship at the Albay Astrodome here.

The Mustangs, in the finals for the first time in eight years, trailed for three quarters before Vengie Vergara, later named Most Valuable Player of the tournament, hit two three-pointers as WNC grabbed the lead for good at 49-47.

Sonny Abaring and Ely Olarte picked it

up from there, giving the Mustangs a 56-51 lead in the closing seconds before Perpetual's Vladimir Joe ended the scoring with a basket at the buzzer.

The Mustangs, who also downed the Altas, 68-62, in the eliminations to complete an eight-game title sweep, also became the first provincial squad to go all the way after Cebu's University of Visayas prevailed in 1980.

West Negros actually picked up a second straight crown after ruling the University Games last October at the expense of Metro Manila squad St. Francis of Assisi.

National University trounced Angeles University Foundation, 92-66, earlier to seize third place in the tournament organized by the Basketball Association of the Philippines in cooperation with the provincial government of Albay headed by Gov. Fernando Gonzalez and the city government of Legazpi led by Mayor Noel Rosal.

"This (crown) is an amazing gift from the Lord," said WNC coach Elvis Atinado. "We always play for God and this is for Him."

No key adjustments were made against the Altas in their second meeting, Atinado

said. "We simply matched up well with them," he added.

Vergara, who received the MVP trophy from Rosal, BAP Region V director Julian Lavadia and Vice Gov. James Calisim, led the Mustangs with 16 points.

Joe paced Perpetual with 22 points.

Meanwhile, Philippine Christian University dumped Iloilo Central Commercial High School, 99-67, to retain its secondary division crown at the Agro Multi-Purpose Recreation Center in Daet, Camarines Norte.

Paolo Guidaben, a 6-foot-3 nephew of

former pro Abet Guidaben, scored 27 points for the Baby Dolphins in their conquest of the 2000 champions.

Also lending support to the event sponsored by Burlington Socks, Air21 Express, Summit Mineral Water, Healthy Options and ML Kuarta Padala are BAP provincial director Dr. Abundio Palencia and Lavadia.

The scores:

WNC 56—Vergara 16, Abaring 15, Olarte 12, Tizon 7, Baciao 3, Espiritu 2, Dapar 1, Baydo 0, Suanle 0.

UPHDS 53—Joe 22, Misa 7, Apor 7, Bauzon 6, Lee 6, Mendoza 5, Balboa 0, Racho 0, Kong 0, Porturbos 0. Quarters: 13-16, 28-31, 39-44, 56-53

NBC stalwart Spring five ties up with Parañaque

SPRING COOKING OIL HAS FOUND A NEW partner in the Parañaque Jets of Vice Mayor and actor-TV host Anjo Yllana a week before the National Basketball Conference's third season kicks off this Friday in Tagaytay City.

After backing the Laguna team of Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro, NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla has decided to hook up with the Jets to allow Laguna to combine forces with Sta. Rosa City.

"It was a mutual, agreement between Spring and Laguna," said Padilla. "Laguna wants to form a new team bannered mostly by local (Laguna) players since this is the real objective of the league. And since most of Spring's players are Metro Manilans, the tie up with Parañaque is the best move."

Vice Mayor Yllana's Jets will merge with Spring's remaining players in the upcoming tournament supported by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, Nature's Spring, Firefly Electric, Molten and Prime Channel.

In their debut last year, the Jets did not do too well after being tagged as one of the favorites. They lost to Bacchus/Harbour Centre in the best-of-three semifinals.

Spring stalwarts Rodel Manuel, Mar Reyes and Danny Capobres, off-season recruits Harold Sta. Cruz, Patrick Tiongco, Ariel de Castro and John Barretto, Marvin Yambao, Lou' Abad, Bambi Barnson, actor Antonio Aquitania and Yllana will make up Spring-Parañaque with Efrén "Yong" Garcia as coach.

Spring-Parañaque will face Bacchus/Harbour Centre of coach Lawrence Chongson and Mike Romero in one of the opening matches at the Tagaytay Convention Center.

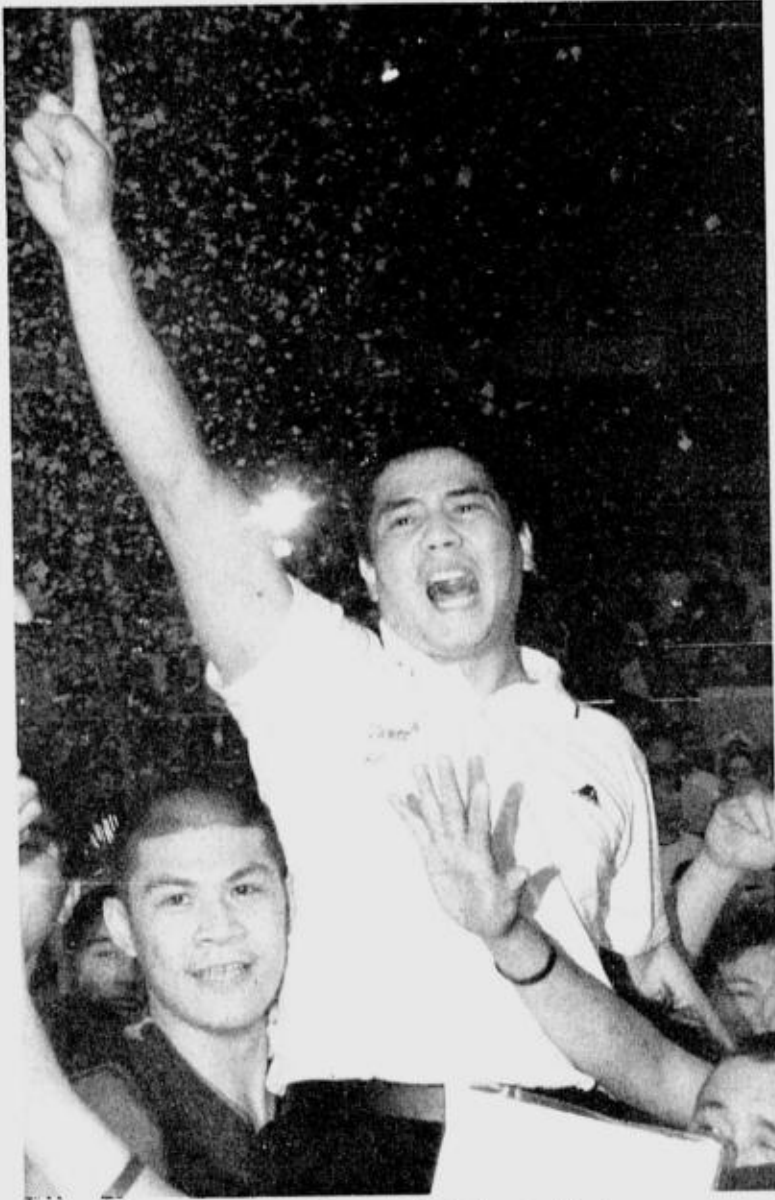
PBA drug tests yield good results

THE PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION continues to be a drug-free organization.

League commissioner Noli Eala yesterday confirmed that all random tests conducted on players during the recent Fiesta Conference yielded negative results.

"I'm very happy with this development," said Eala. "It only shows that with the cooperation of everybody, our vision of being a drug-free league is attainable. I assume the players have realized that the youth look up to them as role models."

Drug controversy hounded the league during Eala's first year in office, an issue that led to the suspension of several players, some of them league standouts.



MONTAÑA coach Robert Sison says he's close to his players. RUDY ESPERAS

Montaña coach Sison set to quit

Disagreement with management over recruit last straw, say sources

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE COACH WHO TURNED THE MONTAÑA Jewels into one of the formidable squads in the PBL will soon be stepping down.

"I would like to take a backseat from the pressures of coaching right now," Jewels head coach Robert Sison said yesterday, less than three weeks before the 2006 PBL Unity Cup kicks off on March 25.

Sison still has a live contract with Montaña until 2007, but said he intends "to settle it" before he tenders his official resignation.

Sources said, however, that the youthful mentor had a "disagreement with the Montaña management" regarding a young player's recruitment.

Team insiders said that Sison already had a "strained relationship" with management since the Jewels bagged the championship in 2005.

Sison hinted yesterday that, indeed, not all is well in the Jewels' camp.

"I'm very close to my players, I've been very transparent with them," he said. "Some of the players said the team's morale is so down."

Assistant coach Nel Parado took over the Jewels' practice yesterday.

"I don't know what system he'll implement or if he'll continue my system," said Sison. "But we got the winning formula. If you're going to experiment with a new one, it would be hard."

Sison, though, might eventually find himself back in the league. Sources said that "other teams are already sending feelers" to sign him up.

After his debut in the 2004 Unity Cup, Sison steered the Jewels to their first ever title in the 2005 Open Championship. The following conference, the Jewels bowed to Welcoat Paints in the finals.

"They were perennial doormats but I gave them respectability," said Sison.

In the recent Heroes Cup, the Jewels struggled to finish sixth after the departure of main man Jon Dan Salvador to the pros.

Clarence Aytona also surprisingly resigned as team manager in April 2005, just two months after the Jewels bagged the title. Aytona said at that time, he just "needed to concentrate on his other businesses."

Orcollo nails 3rd US crown

RENO, NEVADA—WITH THREE TITLES in four weeks, Filipino Dennis Orcollo has become the newest toast of the American billiards scene.

Orcollo routed Edwin Montal, 5-1, in the final to rule the US Bar Box 8-Ball Championship at Sands Regency Hotel and Casino here recently.

It was a fitting follow-up to Orcollo's earlier conquests in the International Pool Tour Qualification Tournament and the World Bar Tour (9-Ball) Open.

En route to the title and the \$10,000 prize that went with it, the 27-year-old Orcollo bested the field of 225 players that included compatriots Antonio Lining and Ramil Gallego and former US Open Champion Gabe Owen.

Orcollo topped Bracket A where he posted notable wins against Nick Hewko, Steve McAninch, Danny Medina and TJ Davis.

The 23rd Southeast Asian Games gold medalist beat Mark Eberle in the semifinals. Montal was the top qualifier in Bracket B after defeating Derek Por-



ON A ROLL: Dennis Orcollo not yet done counting his fortunes. RUDY ESPERAS

giski, Jesse Bowman, Frankie Hernandez and TR Olsen.

"I want to thank those who've been helping me in this US stint," said Orcollo in Filipino, citing longtime benefactor Perry Mariano. "They'll be the first to hold my trophies when I go home."

In his other tournament, Orcollo

placed fourth in the World Bar Tour 8-Ball Championship.

Orcollo, who will next vie in the \$8-million IPT Tour, trains at Bugsy's Lair, located at the corner of Sgt. Esguerra and Scout Bayoran streets, with fellow Mariano proteges Ronnie Alcano, Antonio Gabica, Gandy Valle and Roberto Gomez.

Moto Masters of Asia faces cancellation

THE 2006 FIM-UAM MOTOCROSS MASTERS of Asia faces cancellation if the Department of Finance fails to clear the container loaded with the 10 bikes of foreign riders competing in the event slated March 18-19 in Puerto Princesa City.

The organizing National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (Namssa) has already requested the department to expedite the release of the documents needed to clear the container.

It was learned, however, that the documents have been on the table of a certain lawyer Makatangay for the past 15 days.

"We cannot afford to delay the shipment of the container as everything is set for the event," said Namssa director and FIM-UAM vice president Macky Carapiet. "The Motocross Masters of Asia is a big, prestigious event that will bring honor to the Philippines."

Carapiet said the container should be released tomorrow at the latest to be able to reach Puerto Princesa in time for the event.

Why Gabi lost

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza



WHAT DIOSDADO GABI NEEDS TO DO TO make his boxing career going—no, recapture precious ground—is to restructure his fighting style.

The only thing he proved last Saturday was, he doesn't have world-class moves to beat world-class fighters.

He is one-dimensional. He doesn't have winged feet. He owns a pair of dull fists.

Not to brag but I started telling *balikbayan* Tito Kawile—right after I saw what was happening in the first round of the Gabi-Darchinyan fight last Saturday—that Gabi would be knocked out. Tito was seated beside me next to his pretty wife, Bella, as we watched the fight on TV.

When the knockout came in the eighth, I even thanked God. I also thanked referee David Mendoza for waving Gabi out. Gabi was glassy-eyed after getting tagged with a huge blow to the jaw. It was to his benefit that the referee had to end it 2:42 into the round.

Did Gabi's defeat dent Freddie Roach's sterling record as the trainer of world champions?

No. Roach, who also trains Manny Pacquiao, is not to blame for the loss. There are simply fighters who cannot be easily molded to become world champions. I guess that, in the case of Gabi, Roach would need more than his world-renowned skills to transform him into a world champ.

I guess the correct approach for Roach is to spend nights figuring out how Gabi could be returned home to relearn the basics of not only fighting but also human relations.

Didn't Gabi desert Gov. Manny Piñol, his dis-

coverer, in a most unkind manner?

They have a word for Gabi's loss: karma.

Allen Iverson has been doing his usual chore: Score big numbers in leading Philadelphia to crucial victories in the ongoing NBA season.

I've been an admirer of Iverson since he joined the NBA in 1996, not only because that year, he won Rookie of the Year honors, but also because—and this is the more important reason—despite his being small in the land of the giants that is the NBA, Allen has consistently topped scoring for his team and in almost every game that he has played in.

In his 10th year in the NBA, Iverson's skills and talent have not waned one bit.

I also particularly like Iverson, perhaps the only NBA player carrying the fight for Reebok in the commercial shoe wars (Kobe Bryant endorses Nike after dumping Adidas), because he's been that loyal to Reebok.

Nicknamed "The Answer" for his team-leading roles through the years, Iverson also wears a Reebok model called "The Question" which was launched in 1996, followed by "The Answer" in 1997, when he posted

his career high in rebounds and assists. When he hoisted two Most Valuable Player trophies in the 2001 NBA season and All-Star games, Iverson's models became simply the most saleable items in the market.

I still collect rubber shoes even if I had retired from basketball. They've been my obsession since I was a kid—from Elpo to Spartan to Converse to Grosby. How I wish I'd soon get me a pair each of those two Iverson models. I might be lucky soon as my birthday is fast approaching.

Iverson is my idol because he plays like a Filipino.

Resilient and durable like the Pinoy cager, Iverson, since 1996, had to endure a long list of injuries from the left shoulder separation to right shoulder dislocation, elbow rehab, broken left hand to his left hip pointer, knee contusions down to his ankles.

But I most specifically admire Iverson for his love for his mother. He credits much of his success to his mom that he gave his rookie award to her emphasizing, "I wouldn't be anywhere now without her." During games, his mom is always seen behind the basket with a big poster saying, "That's my boy #31"

His 10-year career is full of ups and downs and he has this to share to the new generation of players: "Remember that the guys who put you on top of the world are the same guys who can put you under, too."

He is quick to add, "Any game could be your last."

Comments to menju@pdltdsl.net



THROUGH: Johnny Arcilla hits a forehand return. EDWIN BACASHAS

Arcilla leads Filipino victors over Japanese

JOHNNY ARCILLA STAMPED HIS class over Shohei Maruyama of Japan, 6-1, 6-0, yesterday at the start of the 2006 Kobe Gakuin Cup Tennis Invitational at the Ayala Alabang Tennis Club.

Arcilla's victory highlighted the Filipinos' excellent form against their Japanese rivals in the five-day tournament that offers P20,000 to the champion.

Rolando Ruel Jr. overwhelmed

Japanese Junpei Okabe, 6-1, 6-3; Chiemel Mantua routed Shimpei Moriguchi, 6-2, 6-2; and Elbert Anasta blasted Masaya Taira, 6-2, 6-2.

But Jaime Solon, Gilbert Estrada and Rocky Paglalunan were not as lucky. Solon lost to Naoki Miyake, 6-3, 3-6, 6-1; Estrada bowed to Fuyuki Ogawa, 6-4, 6-4, and Paglalunan fell to Masaki Kawazu, 7-6 (7), 6-4.

Suns shine, dump Mavs

NEW YORK—BORIS DIAW PICKED UP HIS second career triple double as the Phoenix Suns won their 10th straight with a 115-107 victory over Dallas on Sunday.

The win equaled a season-high streak for the Suns, while Dallas saw their franchise-record 16 home game winning streak come to an end. Diaw notched 24 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists, while Leandro Barbosa chipped in with 20 points for Phoenix, which shot 54 percent from the floor and made 10 of 22 from 3-point land.

Dirk Nowitzki led Dallas with 25 points and nine rebounds, but managed just three points in the final quarter as the Mavs faded down the stretch.

Phoenix (41-17) has the fourth-best record in the NBA and trail only Dallas and San Antonio in the Western Conference.

The loss was the second in three games for the Mavericks, coming off a stretch where they won 19 of 20. The two losses came to San Antonio and Phoenix, the two teams closest to them in the Western Conference standings.

Reuters

Complete results: Indiana 94, Philadelphia 93; Washington 117, Sacramento 107; Minnesota 103, Golden State 90; Phoenix 115, Dallas 107; Toronto 111, Boston 105.

Solar Sports will air the San Antonio-LA Lakers tussle at 11:30 a.m. today.



PHILADELPHIA 76ers' Allen Iverson fires a jumper over Indiana Pacers' Fred Jones in their NBA game Sunday.

Bryant centerpiece of new-look US five

NEW YORK—KOBE BRYANT WILL BE the centerpiece of the new-look USA Basketball team that is expected to improve upon a disappointing bronze medal at the 2004 Olympics.

Bryant brings NBA championship credentials and high-powered scoring, joining Carmelo Anthony, LeBron James and 20 other players selected Sunday for a possible spot on the world championship and 2008 Beijing Olympic teams.

"It's his time," USA Basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski said of Bryant. "He's 27 years old now. He should try to assume a position of leadership in the team. I would think he's very hungry to do this. I see him fitting in very, very well."

Bryant was supposed to play in Athens, but withdrew because of his sexual assault trial in Colorado. Criminal charges eventually were dropped, and he settled a civil suit with his accuser.

"It's a huge honor," Bryant said. "I'm very proud to be a part of the team and us trying to

gain back what we feel is ours—and that's the gold medal."

Lamar Odom, Shawn Marion, Amare Stoudemire and Dwyane Wade—members of the 2004 Athens team—also were selected to the roster. They'll be joined by Gilbert Arenas, Shane Battier, Chauncey Billups, Chris Bosh, Bruce Bowen and Elton

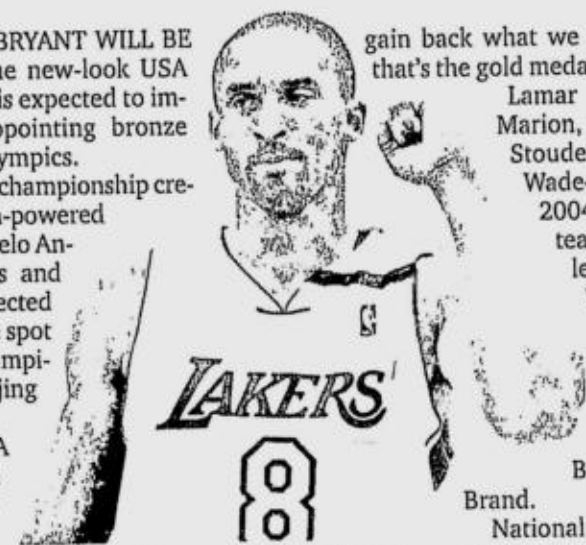
Brand.

National team managing director Jerry Colangelo announced the team. He was appointed last April and hired Krzyzewski after the United States finished a disappointing sixth in the 2002 worlds in Indianapolis and third in Athens.

Others on the roster include Dwight Howard, Antawn Jamison, Joe Johnson, Brad Miller, Chris Paul, Paul Pierce, Michael Redd and Luke Ridnour.

College players J.J. Redick (Duke) and Adam Morrison (Gonzaga) also were chosen.

AP



IT'S a huge honor, says Kobe Bryant.

Tiger retains Doral crown

MIAMI—TIGER Woods survived a faltering finish to clinch his third victory of the year with a one-shot triumph at the Doral Championship on Sunday.

The world number one, two ahead overnight in his title defense at the Blue Monster course, bogeyed the last two holes for a three-under-par 69.

That left Woods at 20-under 268, a stroke in front of fellow American David Toms and PGA Tour rookie Camilo Villegas of Colombia who carded matching 67s.

Sony Open champion Toms reeled off six birdies in calm conditions at Doral and had a chance of forcing a playoff before bogeying the final hole.

Woods, wayward off the tee for most of the round, became the second player in the tournament's 45-year history to successfully defend his crown, following fellow American Raymond Floyd in 1981.



TIGER Woods survives bogey-bogey finish.

It was also the 48th PGA Tour victory of his career.

Woods tightened his hold on the trophy with a birdie at the par-five first.

He then parred eight and nine to reach the turn in three-under 33, three ahead of the chasing pack.

World number four Ernie Els, back at Doral for the first time since he won the

event in 2002, carded a 69 to tie for seventh at 13 under.

Phil Mickelson, two ahead going into the final round last year before being overhauled by Woods, ended up a stroke behind the South African.

The left-hander returned a 73 after double-bogeying the par-three ninth where he found water off the tee.

Among the other big names, world number three Retief Goosen fired an eight-birdie 66 to finish at 11-under 277, level with second-ranked Vijay Singh who closed with a 67.

Reuters

World Baseball fails to impress Japanese fans

TOKYO—THE BRAND-NEW WORLD BASEBALL Classic has struggled to spark a resurgence of interest in the sport in Japan, with the spotlight staying on football in the year of the World Cup finals.

South Korea's 3-2 shock upset of top favorite Japan here on Sunday, in the last match of the all-Asian four-nation pool, fought for space with football in the dailies Monday in this avowed home of Asian baseball.

"Hat-trick from Yanagisawa!" blared the eye-catcher headline in the Nikkan Sports daily about former Messina striker Atsushi Yanagisawa's three-goal feat for the J-League's Kashima.

The Pool A battles, involving Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and China, raised the curtain on the Classic, organized by US Major League Baseball (MLB) as a quadrennial affair to emulate the World Cup.

South Korea, 3-0, and Japan, 2-1, headed for the US state of Arizona Monday to train for the March 12-16 second round in Anaheim, California, with the top two from Pool B of the United States, Canada, Mexico and South Africa.

But many MLB stars have opted out of playing for their countries for reasons including fear of injury in the midst of all-important pre-season training.

"Overall, the first round-robin was a success," said MLB president Bob DuPuy.

AFP

Olivarez High a win shy of NCRAA title

GAMES TODAY (Battle for third place at the Arellano Legarda gym)
9 a.m.—St. Francis vs PUP (Boys)
10:30 a.m.—La Salle-Dasma vs PUP (Sr)

ERWIN ENCELA AND MARLON VIZCARRA powered Olivarez High School to a 72-64 victory over Arellano University yesterday in the junior division finals of the 13th National Capital Region Athletic Association at the San Andres Gym.

Encela had a game-high 20 points and Vizcarra 15 for Olivarez College, which moved within a win of clinching the best-of-three

championship series.

Olivarez needs only to repeat against Arellano tomorrow to claim the crown.

Encela struck hardest in the opening minutes, unloading four points during a 6-0 spurt which handed Olivarez a 26-14 edge at the end of the opening period.

It was his drive with 9:26 left which enabled Olivarez College to take charge with an 11-point spread, 61-50.

Four charities from Vizcarra in the dying minutes of the third period enabled Olivarez to stay ahead, 56-50.

Vizcarra sustained a bad fall in the final

minutes and was taken out of the game.

His absence moved the Olivarez cagers to push themselves even harder, with Encela's pair of free throws with 4:56 to go giving his team a 67-54 spread.

In the women's side, Katherine de Guzman knocked in 16 points for the Philippine Maritime Institute Lady Admirals as they blasted Polytechnic University of the Philippines, 77-56, in Game 1 of the women's finals.

Meanwhile, the La Salle-Dasmariñas Patriots seek third place when they take on the PUP Maroons at 10:30 a.m. today at the Arellano Legarda gym.

Paragua, Antonio on course for q'finals

GRANDMASTER MARK PARAGUA downed fellow Olympian National Master Manny Senador in the first match of the knockout stage to move within a draw of the quarterfinals in the 5th La Union Open Chess Championships at the Diego Silang Hall of the La Union Provincial Capitol Building Monday.

The highest-rated Filipino player ever with an Elo of 2618 won after 32 moves of an Albin Counter Gambit. Also taking the lead in their respective series are defending champion GM Joey Antonio, International Masters Ronaldo Dableo and Richard Bitoon, Fide Master Oliver Dimakiling and National Master Andrew Vasquez.

Paragua will handle black in the second game of the two-game standard play series.

Antonio deftly handled the black



LA UNION Gov. Victor F. Ortega and GM Eugene Torre make the ceremonial moves to kick-off the 5th La Union Open Chess Championship. From left: Councilor Pablo C. Ortega, former Benguet Gov. Raul Molintas, San Fernando City Mayor Mary Jane C. Ortega, GM Mark Paragua, Marilen Torre, NCFP secretary general Samuel D. Estimo, tournament director Joseph A. Dumulak and former La Union provincial board member David D. Aguila.

pieces of a Caro Kann encounter to beat Chito Garma after 50 moves while Dableo bested Ruston To-

lentino in 27 moves of French.

Bitoon subdued Christopher Castellano in 25 moves of a Sicil-

ian, Dimakiling trounced Rhobel Legaspi in 38 moves of Benoni and Vasquez scalped Ali Branzuela in 41 moves of French.

Antonio, Dableo, Bitoon and Vasquez will go for the clincher using the white pieces while Dimakiling plays with black in Game 2.

In other matches, Asia's first GM Eugene Torre agreed to an 18-move draw with Rodolfo Panopio in their Queen's Gambit-Declined duel while IM Barlo Nadera and 12-year-old FM Wesley So split the point after 46 moves of a Nimzo Indian.

Torre and Nadera will handle black in the next match of the tournament being supported by the La Union local government headed by Gov. Victor F. Ortega and San Fernando City Mayor Mary Jane C. Ortega. NM Marlon Bernardino



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CITY OF MAASIN
Bids and Awards Committee

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

- The City Government of Maasin through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites all interested suppliers, dealers, distributors and contractors to apply for eligibility and to submit bids for the Supply and delivery of three (3) units LK mobile flash dryer (LK-12FD) w/ 7HP diesel engine and four (4) units LK thresher-husker-sheller combined (LK-150) w/ 7HP diesel engine with an Approved Budget of the Contract of two million eight hundred ten pesos, Philippine currency (Php2,810,000.00).
- The Bids and Awards Committee will hold a Pre-bid Conference on Thursday, March 16, 2006 at ten o'clock in the morning at the City Conference Room, City Hall, Maasin City.
- Interested bidders may obtain a complete set of bidding documents from March 9 to 27, 2006 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of 0.1% of the Approved Budget of the Contract to the City Treasury Services, Maasin City.
- Deadline for the submission applications for eligibility to bid and bid proposals shall be on Tuesday, March 28, 2006 at ten o'clock in the morning at the City Conference Room, City Hall, Maasin City. Immediately after the deadline, applications for eligibility and bid proposals will be opened in the presence of the bidder's representatives.
- The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use the non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted. All particulars relative to the Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, evaluation of bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.
- The City Government of Maasin assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate and indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of bid. The Bids and Awards Committee of the city of Maasin reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defects or formality therein and to accept bids considered complying and most advantageous to the government.
- For more information, please contact the BAC Secretariat at telephone numbers 570-8608 or 570-8824.

(Sgd.) CRISPIN M. ARONG, JR.
Chairman

(PMH - March 7 & 14, 2006)

ENTERTAINMENT

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Editor Emmie G. Velarde

Fil-Am director set to take on Hollywood

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

A SUMMA CUM LAUDE graduate of Film and Television from the University of California Los Angeles, 28-year-old Filipino-American Ana Marie Laperal has set up her own independent production company, Leaudouce Films, in Hollywood.

For her directorial debut, she will shoot the World War II romance drama, "Seed of Contention," which she also wrote, in Malate, Manila.

Fellow Fil-Am and friend Donita Rose will make her international debut in Laperal's film, which features Hollywood actors Leonor Varela ("Cleopatra," "Blade 2") and Matthew Settle ("Band of Brothers," "Into the West") in the lead.

If there's a United Nations vibe on the set of "Seed," Laperal says it's because she has gathered a multinational cast and crew. "Donita's from the Philippines; Leonor is Chilean; our cinematog-

Ana Marie Laperal, who once worked with Jodie Foster, now directs Donita Rose in an international movie to be shot in Malate

TAKE FIVE

fact that Catonné had worked on "Indochine" with actress Cather-

rapher François Catonné is French; our camera operator Daniele Massaccesi is Italian."

She confided to INQUIRER Entertainment that she's daunted by the

ine Deneuve and Massaccesi with director Steven Spielberg in "Munich."

"How did that happen?" she gasped. Laperal is just being modest, of course. Her own resumé is formidable as well.

She won the Samuel Goldwyn

FIL-AM/A2-4



ANA Marie Laperal

Flower Power, Rustom's tale and Marvin's model

IS MARVIN AGUSTIN SMITTEN WITH HALF-Australian model Lani, the ex of South Border's Duncan Ramos? My source tells me that a common friend of Marv's and Lani set them up on a Valentine date. Since then, Marv's been spending a lot of time in Lani's condo. Is there anything romantic going on? I see nothing wrong with this. Marv's a single dad, but technically he's still free. Besides, being a happier person would make him an even better dad!

Guess who?

GUESS who this young show biz couple is? Their relationship is on the rocks because they are trying to beat each other in their own game. The guy, a singer, is said to date girls left and right, while the girl, a sexy actress, flirts with lots of guys. Her latest conquest is the director of her TV commercial.

Frantic text

GOT a frantic text from Angeli Valenciano regarding my item about her ward Heart Evangelista. It said: "Heart has been taping every other day. She almost died when she was hospitalized, so it's unfair [for you] to say that she has been missing in action."

She's Heart's manager; I get her drift. But she can't expect to control some network insiders' feelings about Heart's behavior. After all she's not around Heart 24/7. Let's just all try to co-exist in peace.

No surprise

I WASN'T a bit surprised when Rustom Padilla admitted on "Pinoy Big Brother" that he's gay. I alluded to that in my column about the invite I got to be one of the celebrity housemates. Everyone saw that confession coming; it was quite anti-climactic. Besides, sexuality is just a small part of one's personality. It's just ironic that Rustom had to be confined in Big Brother's house for him to liberate himself.

Baguio break

WHEN a national state of emergency was declared, I was in Baguio with some media colleagues for the Panagbenga Festival.

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal



My profuse thanks to The Manor at Camp John Hay's cool GM, Heiner Maulbecker, resident manager Jocelyn Ompoc and YMV's (Ysmael, Moyer Valenzuela & Associates) superwomen Rosary and Ika Ysmael for the most heavenly weekend ever!

The Manor is distinctive for its impressive architecture, cozy interiors and environment. It was designed to blend with towering pine trees and offers a magnificent view of the Cordillera mountain range.

The interiors emulate the atmosphere, history and the fond memories of the old Baguio. Wooden shuttered doors open to patios with breathtaking views—truly five-star, with a homey feel.

Some of the stars I spotted were Judy Ann Santos (sans Ryan Agoncillo), Christina Gonzales, Tweety de Leon with her hubby, Sam Milby, and other former PBB housemates, and RJ Jacinto. Heiner Maulbecker told me that there will soon be a little of everything that symbolizes Baguio right in the premises of John Hay—"strawberries, brooms, even ukay-ukay stuff, so they can stay within CJH and enjoy." Another wonderful plan is to provide helicopter service for hotel guests to the famed Banaue Rice Terraces.

Thus, while Manila was on the verge of yet another People Power, I was celebrating Flower Power in the middle of Session Road. The colorful Panagbenga floats of all shapes and sizes made me feel like I was floating as well. I suddenly remembered one of my mom's fave sayings: "Bloom where you are planted."

(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com)

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4	HOSTEL	R-18

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HOSTEL R18 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00	PINK PANTHER G 12:30, 2:45	MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA PG13 12:50, 3:50, 6:50, 9:50
FEARLESS PG13 1:35, 3:50, 6:05, 8:20, 10:30	BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2 G 1:35, 3:45, 5:55, 8:05, 10:15	PRIDE AND PREJUDICE G 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:15

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE
Tuesday March 7, 2006

Who will be next? Find out here on your Philippine Idol Network



Provided by ClickTheCity.com

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Channel	2:30PM	3:30PM	4:30PM	5:30PM	6:30PM	7:30PM	8:30PM	9:30PM	10:30PM	11:30PM	12:30PM
ABC 5	World Pool League	World Pool League	World Pool League	World Pool League	World Pool League	World Pool League	World Pool League	World Pool League	World Pool League	World Pool League	World Pool League
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema	Kapamilya Cinema	Kapamilya Cinema	Kapamilya Cinema	Kapamilya Cinema	Kapamilya Cinema	Kapamilya Cinema	Kapamilya Cinema	Kapamilya Cinema	Kapamilya Cinema	Kapamilya Cinema
AXN	Lost (Season II)	Lost (Season II)	Lost (Season II)	Lost (Season II)	Lost (Season II)	Lost (Season II)	Lost (Season II)	Lost (Season II)	Lost (Season II)	Lost (Season II)	Lost (Season II)
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Johnny Bravo	Johnny Bravo	Johnny Bravo	Johnny Bravo	Johnny Bravo	Johnny Bravo	Johnny Bravo	Johnny Bravo	Johnny Bravo	Johnny Bravo
Cinemax	The Son Walks (2:45 PM)	The Son Walks (2:45 PM)	The Son Walks (2:45 PM)	The Son Walks (2:45 PM)	The Son Walks (2:45 PM)	The Son Walks (2:45 PM)	The Son Walks (2:45 PM)	The Son Walks (2:45 PM)	The Son Walks (2:45 PM)	The Son Walks (2:45 PM)	The Son Walks (2:45 PM)
CNN	Business International	Business International	Business International	Business International	Business International	Business International	Business International	Business International	Business International	Business International	Business International
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series
ESPN	Pro Bowlers 2005 Women's Tournament of Champions (Live)	Pro Bowlers 2005 Women's Tournament of Champions (Live)	Pro Bowlers 2005 Women's Tournament of Champions (Live)	Pro Bowlers 2005 Women's Tournament of Champions (Live)	Pro Bowlers 2005 Women's Tournament of Champions (Live)	Pro Bowlers 2005 Women's Tournament of Champions (Live)	Pro Bowlers 2005 Women's Tournament of Champions (Live)	Pro Bowlers 2005 Women's Tournament of Champions (Live)	Pro Bowlers 2005 Women's Tournament of Champions (Live)	Pro Bowlers 2005 Women's Tournament of Champions (Live)	Pro Bowlers 2005 Women's Tournament of Champions (Live)
ETC	The Insider	The Insider	The Insider	The Insider	The Insider	The Insider	The Insider	The Insider	The Insider	The Insider	The Insider
EWTV	Catholic Social Teaching	Catholic Social Teaching	Catholic Social Teaching	Catholic Social Teaching	Catholic Social Teaching	Catholic Social Teaching	Catholic Social Teaching	Catholic Social Teaching	Catholic Social Teaching	Catholic Social Teaching	Catholic Social Teaching
Fox News	Harvey & Corinne	Harvey & Corinne	Harvey & Corinne	Harvey & Corinne	Harvey & Corinne	Harvey & Corinne	Harvey & Corinne	Harvey & Corinne	Harvey & Corinne	Harvey & Corinne	Harvey & Corinne
GMA 7	Kung Mambuhay	Kung Mambuhay	Kung Mambuhay	Kung Mambuhay	Kung Mambuhay	Kung Mambuhay	Kung Mambuhay	Kung Mambuhay	Kung Mambuhay	Kung Mambuhay	Kung Mambuhay
Hallmark Channel	Boatwreck	Boatwreck	Boatwreck	Boatwreck	Boatwreck	Boatwreck	Boatwreck	Boatwreck	Boatwreck	Boatwreck	Boatwreck
HBO	Dark Horse (3:45 PM)	Dark Horse (3:45 PM)	Dark Horse (3:45 PM)	Dark Horse (3:45 PM)	Dark Horse (3:45 PM)	Dark Horse (3:45 PM)	Dark Horse (3:45 PM)	Dark Horse (3:45 PM)	Dark Horse (3:45 PM)	Dark Horse (3:45 PM)	Dark Horse (3:45 PM)
Hero TV	Yakult Japan	Yakult Japan	Yakult Japan	Yakult Japan	Yakult Japan	Yakult Japan	Yakult Japan	Yakult Japan	Yakult Japan	Yakult Japan	Yakult Japan
IBC 13	EZ Shop	EZ Shop	EZ Shop	EZ Shop	EZ Shop	EZ Shop	EZ Shop	EZ Shop	EZ Shop	EZ Shop	EZ Shop
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jay Stewart	The Daily Show With Jay Stewart	The Daily Show With Jay Stewart	The Daily Show With Jay Stewart	The Daily Show With Jay Stewart	The Daily Show With Jay Stewart	The Daily Show With Jay Stewart	The Daily Show With Jay Stewart	The Daily Show With Jay Stewart	The Daily Show With Jay Stewart	The Daily Show With Jay Stewart
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	Secret Gardens	Secret Gardens	Secret Gardens	Secret Gardens	Secret Gardens	Secret Gardens	Secret Gardens	Secret Gardens	Secret Gardens	Secret Gardens
MTV Philippines	MTV Screen	MTV Screen	MTV Screen	MTV Screen	MTV Screen	MTV Screen	MTV Screen	MTV Screen	MTV Screen	MTV Screen	MTV Screen
MYX	Rock MYX	Rock MYX	Rock MYX	Rock MYX	Rock MYX	Rock MYX	Rock MYX	Rock MYX	Rock MYX	Rock MYX	Rock MYX
National Geographic	Wild Family Secrets	Wild Family Secrets	Wild Family Secrets	Wild Family Secrets	Wild Family Secrets	Wild Family Secrets	Wild Family Secrets	Wild Family Secrets	Wild Family Secrets	Wild Family Secrets	Wild Family Secrets
NBN	New Life TV Shopping	New Life TV Shopping	New Life TV Shopping	New Life TV Shopping	New Life TV Shopping	New Life TV Shopping	New Life TV Shopping	New Life TV Shopping	New Life TV Shopping	New Life TV Shopping	New Life TV Shopping
Nickelodeon	ChalkZone	ChalkZone	ChalkZone	ChalkZone	ChalkZone	ChalkZone	ChalkZone	ChalkZone	ChalkZone	ChalkZone	ChalkZone
PBO	Rocky & Rocky	Rocky & Rocky	Rocky & Rocky	Rocky & Rocky	Rocky & Rocky	Rocky & Rocky	Rocky & Rocky	Rocky & Rocky	Rocky & Rocky	Rocky & Rocky	Rocky & Rocky
QTV	Samurai Champloo	Samurai Champloo	Samurai Champloo	Samurai Champloo	Samurai Champloo	Samurai Champloo	Samurai Champloo	Samurai Champloo	Samurai Champloo	Samurai Champloo	Samurai Champloo
RPN 9	TV Shopping	TV Shopping	TV Shopping	TV Shopping	TV Shopping	TV Shopping	TV Shopping	TV Shopping	TV Shopping	TV Shopping	TV Shopping
SBN 21	Now Life TV Shopping	Now Life TV Shopping	Now Life TV Shopping	Now Life TV Shopping	Now Life TV Shopping	Now Life TV Shopping	Now Life TV Shopping	Now Life TV Shopping	Now Life TV Shopping	Now Life TV Shopping	Now Life TV Shopping
Solar Sports	At England 2000 Final	At England 2000 Final	At England 2000 Final	At England 2000 Final	At England 2000 Final	At England 2000 Final	At England 2000 Final	At England 2000 Final	At England 2000 Final	At England 2000 Final	At England 2000 Final
Sports Plus	Bay Area Celebrity Poker Challenge	Bay Area Celebrity Poker Challenge	Bay Area Celebrity Poker Challenge	Bay Area Celebrity Poker Challenge	Bay Area Celebrity Poker Challenge	Bay Area Celebrity Poker Challenge	Bay Area Celebrity Poker Challenge	Bay Area Celebrity Poker Challenge	Bay Area Celebrity Poker Challenge	Bay Area Celebrity Poker Challenge	Bay Area Celebrity Poker Challenge
Star Movies	Nature Unleashed	Nature Unleashed	Nature Unleashed	Nature Unleashed	Nature Unleashed	Nature Unleashed	Nature Unleashed	Nature Unleashed	Nature Unleashed	Nature Unleashed	Nature Unleashed
Star World	The God & The Beauty	The God & The Beauty	The God & The Beauty	The God & The Beauty	The God & The Beauty	The God & The Beauty	The God & The Beauty	The God & The Beauty	The God & The Beauty	The God & The Beauty	The God & The Beauty
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1 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA • THX 1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00	6 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
2 FEARLESS 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	7 NASAAN SI FRANCIS? 1:40 3:40 5:40 7:40 9:40
3 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00	8 HOSTEL Sneak Preview
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	9 AEON FLUX 1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00
5 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE 11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00	10 CLOSE TO YOU 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

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1 FEARLESS 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	5 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
2 CLOSE TO YOU 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	6 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA 11:40 2:10 4:40 7:30 10:00
3 HOSTEL Sneak Preview	7 NASAAN SI FRANCIS? 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 9:50
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	

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1 CLOSE TO YOU 1:45 4:15 6:45 9:15	5 MURDER 12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00
2 FEARLESS 11:05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05	6 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2 11:45 2:05 4:25 6:45 9:05
3 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA 11:40 2:40 5:50 9:00	7 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 12:05 2:55 5:50 9:00
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3 11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10	8 HOSTEL Sneak Preview

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1 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA	4 FEARLESS
2 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN	5 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
	6 HOSTEL Sneak Preview

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2 CLOSE TO YOU	2 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
3 RESERVE	3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 RESERVE	4 HOSTEL Sneak Preview



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march 6 and 7
mtcrb rating: R-18
showing on March 15
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2 HOSTEL Sneak Preview	2 UNDERWORLD 2
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5 FEARLESS
10:40, 1:00, 3:20, 5:40, 8:00, 10:20 PG13

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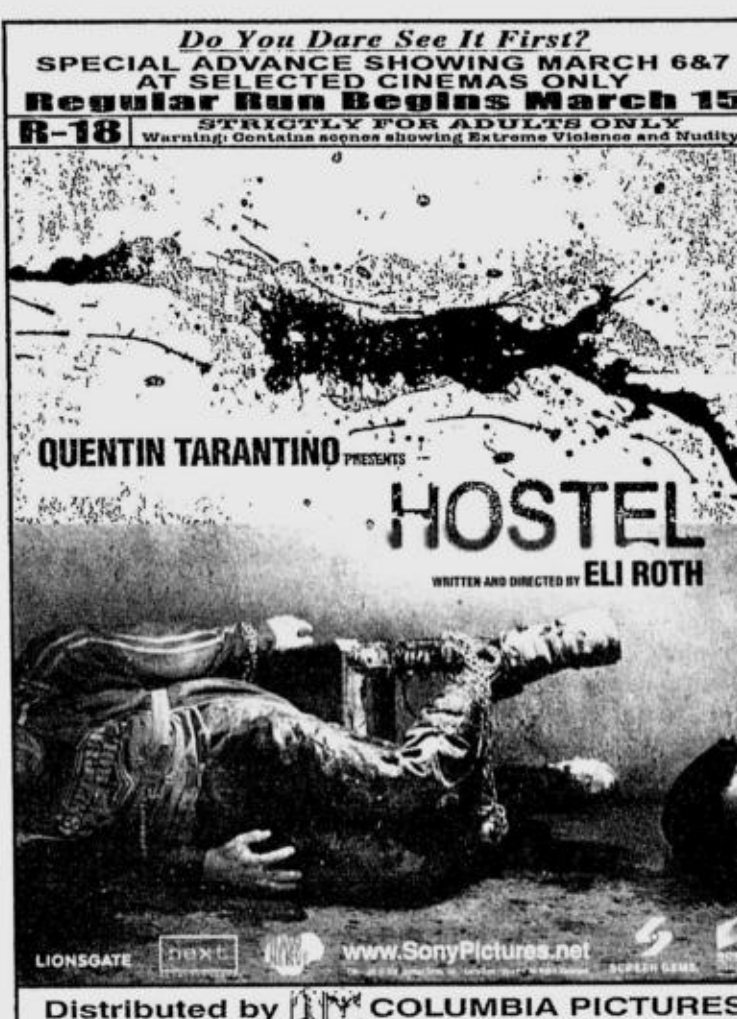
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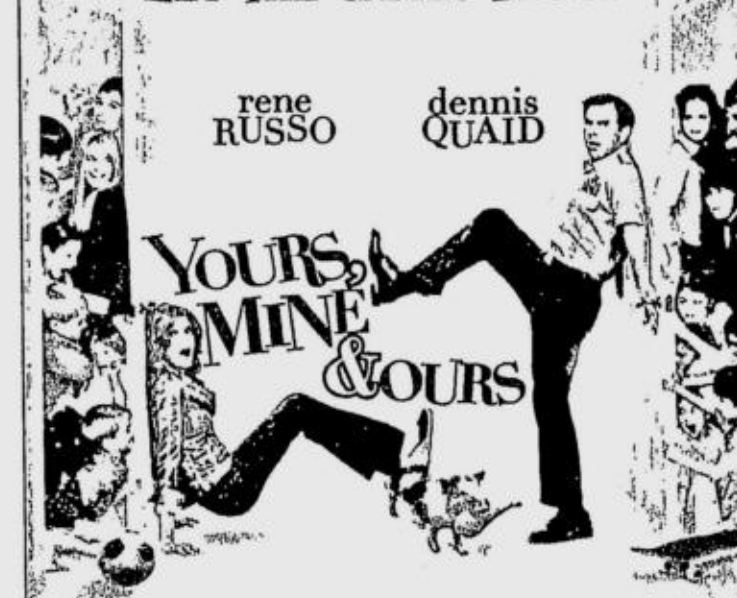
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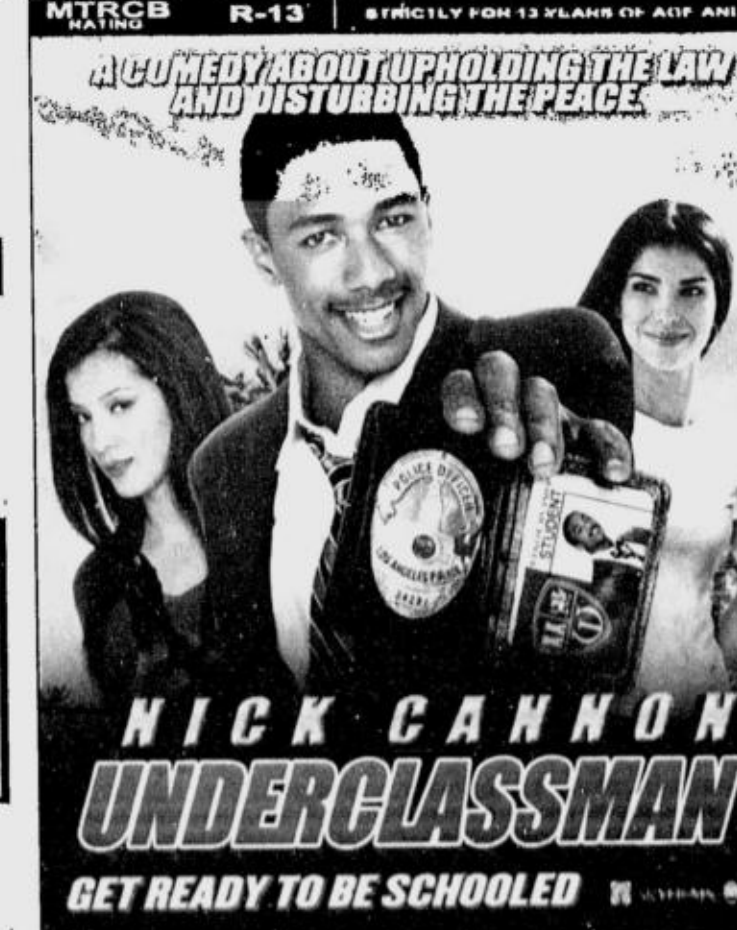


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MTRCB RATING: R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP



A2-2

TUESDAY,
MARCH 7, 2006

2nd Moonrise docu fest
now accepting entries

CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS and Education (CEAE) and the Ford Conservation and Environmental Grants are now accepting entries to the second Moonrise Documentary Film Festival set Aug. 18 to 20.

The festival hopes to showcase documentaries on environmental and socio-cultural issues, according to Jukka Holopainen, CEAE president.

"Aside from professional filmmakers we are also inviting first-time directors, teachers and students to submit entries," said Holopainen. "The docu can tackle any subject—from garbage to historical sites. We are looking for entries that are both educational and entertaining."

Winning films will have the chance to be shown in different festivals here and abroad.

Last year's Moonrise gathered over 1,600 teachers, students, religious, government and NGO officials at the Gateway Mall.

Deadline for early submission is May 31 and, for late submission, June 30. Visit www.moonrisefilmfest.com, call 721-7360 or e-mail email@ceae.org.





Action hero worship

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

NATIONAL PRIDE AND MARTIAL arts make not-so-strange bedfellows in "Fearless," where Jet Li portrays famous Chinese combatant Huo Yuanjia. The historic figure's tale is one replete with sorrow and hollow victories before his reputation evolved to almost superhuman proportions in 1910. But as the much-celebrated champion of the

Wushu disciplines, Yuanjia—who opens the film fighting four tough foreign opponents in a row—is rendered well in a long flashback, book-ended between scenes of that fateful match.

Like many Pinoy's fixation with boxing champs, the Chinese in the movie become unified and inspired by Yuanjia's unearthly fighting talents, affording them a renewed sense of pride and temporary escape from their roles. But a particular tournament organized by a

cabal of foreigners determined to demoralize the Chinese people seeks to end Yuanjia's undisputed reign. Set in a tumultuous period in Chinese history, "Fearless" tells a familiar story of a man conquering his failures and rising above them and so on, yadda yadda, ad infinitum.

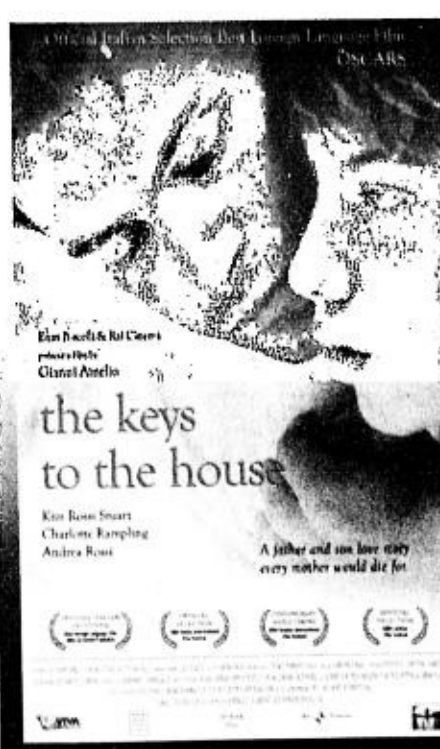
Transcending all his misery and losing people he held dear makes the tragic character truly fearless, thus the title.

ACTION/A2-4

SANTANA
ORIGINAL LEAD SINGER
GREGG ROULIE
Santana Roots tour
APRIL 7 ARANETA COLISEUM
APRIL 8 CLARK EXPO
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Michael Carabello, Adrian Areas
Alphonso Johnson
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Black Magic Woman, Soul Sacrifice, Oye Como Va,
No One to Depend On, Everybody's Everything,
Persuasion, Jingo, Everything is Coming Our Way,
Samba Pa Ti, Hope Your Feeling Better, Evil Ways

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Robinsons Movieworld
GALLERIA

SYNOPSIS:

Gianni is a father who removed himself from the child rearing process when his mentally and physically challenged son, Paolo, was born. Paolo's mother died giving birth, so a kindly couple picked up the reins and raised him under trying circumstances. Fifteen years later, a guilt-stricken Gianni gets back in touch with his, offering to accompany him on a trip to a hospital in Berlin. Paolo cautiously agrees to the trip with his father, but the reunion was awkward for both parties. The level of care Paolo requires is problematic for Gianni, while Paolo seizes the opportunity to unleash some pent up anger he's kept simmering beneath the surface for the previous 15 years. But a chance meeting at the hospital reveals Gianni and a fellow parent of a disabled child, the long-lost father with a lifetime

March 08 to 14

Subject for MTRCB Rating

For SCREENING SCHEDULES, pls. call our CINEMA ACCESS 835-5555 or visit us www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

MTRCB R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE

OPENS TOMORROW

IN AMERICA THERE'S 'THE AMITYVILLE HORROR'...
IN THE U.K. THERE IS 'THE DARK'...

A GRIEF-STRICKEN FAMILY,
A TRAGEDY-HAUNTED HOUSE ON THE
CLIFFS OF WALES AND A SMALL TOWN'S
SECRET HISTORY

In an attempt to pull her family together,
New Yorker Adele Tullian travels with her
daughter Sarah to Anglesey, Wales in the
U.K. to visit her contractor father - James
Tullian.

The morning after they arrive, Sarah
mysteriously vanishes. While the parents
desperately search for Sarah, a guilt-
ridden Adele is haunted by visions of her
daughter as though she is trapped some-
where inside the haunted house. Adele
soon learns of an ancient local legend of a
place called The Dark - an ethereal land
of the dead - and she becomes convinced
that Sarah is communicating to her from
The Dark.

Not long after Sarah disappears, Adele
and James find themselves involved with
a girl who not only bears a striking
resemblance to their missing daughter,
but reveals that she has returned from the
dead to inform them on how to get Sarah
back. They must follow the rule: 'one of
the living, for one of the dead. The living
must be sacrificed so that the dead can
return. Townsfolk suspect that the
Tullians are succumbing to the legacy of
madness and murder that overwhelmed
the house's previous tenants.

THE
DARK

SEAN BEAN MARIA BELLO

BASED ON A
TRUE INCIDENT
THAT TAPS INTO A
WELSH
MYTHOLOGY



WATCH THE WORLD'S GREATEST LOVER IN ACTION!

OPENS TOMORROW!

MTRCB R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS AND UP

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HEATH LEDGER SIENNA MILLER JEREMY IRONS
CASANOVA

TOUCHSTONE PICTURES Presents A MARK GORDON COMPANY-HALLSTROM/HOLLERAN Production A Film By LASSE HALLSTROM "CASANOVA" HEATH LEDGER
SIENNA MILLER JEREMY IRONS OLIVER PLATT LENA OLIN JENNY BEAVAN ANDREW MONDSHEIN A.C.E. DAVID GROPMAN
DIRECTED BY OLIVER STAPLETON, B.S.C. PRODUCED BY SU ARMSTRONG ADAM MERIMS GARY LEVINSOHN MARK GORDON BETSY BEERS LESLIE HOLLERAN
WRITTEN BY KIMBERLY SIMI AND MICHAEL CRISTOFER DIRECTED BY JEFFREY HATCHER AND KIMBERLY SIMI PRODUCED BY LASSE HALLSTROM

Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

OPENS MARCH 15
LOVE IN DISGUISE

Amanda BYNES

She's THE MAN

ARE YOU REALLY WHO YOU ARE?

LANCASHIRE ENTERTAINMENT AND THE ARAMOUNTS PICTURES PRESENT A BORNHEIM COMPANY PRODUCTION AMANDA BYNES "SHE'S THE MAN" CHANNING TATUM LAURA HANLEY
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PRODUCED BY JAMES NEWTON HOWARD AND JAMES NEWTON HOWARD WRITTEN BY JAMES NEWTON HOWARD AND JAMES NEWTON HOWARD DIRECTED BY JAMES NEWTON HOWARD

Michael Bolton at the Big Dome March 29

US SINGER-SONGWRITER Michael Bolton, whose trans-Atlantic hits include "Go The Distance" and "How

Am I Supposed To Live Without You," performs at the Araneta Coliseum on March 29.

The single-night engagement—originally set in December—is presented by Sprezzatura Inc. and PLDT.

Bolton has sold over 52 million albums and singles worldwide, and clinched Grammys and American Music Awards.

He has shared the concert stage with fellow superstars Barbra Streisand, Cher, Babyface, Ray Charles, and Luciano Pavarotti.

His vocal styling has been described as a "collision of thunder and lightning." Pinoy fans can expect to experience this in "Michael Bolton Live in Manila."

From his latest album, "Vintage," the singer will perform such classic standards as "All The Way," "A Kiss To Build A Dream On," "The Very Thought Of You," "When I Fall In Love" and "Smile."

Call 911-5555.

Bamboo @ Virgin Cafe on March 9

Bamboo sizzles with the Filipino youth's latest anthems, "Pinoy Ako" and "Halleluia," plus other major hits from their two albums on Thursday, March 9, 10 p.m., at Virgin Cafe.

The band's members are Bamboo Manalac, Nathan Azarcon, Ira Cruz and Vic Mercado.

Virgin Cafe is located at 308 Tomas Morato corner Madrinan Streets, Quezon City. Call 926-8039.

Kuh and Pops repeat

Kuh Ledesma and Pops Fernandez's Valentine concert, "Let's Talk About Love" will be

restaged for the last time on March 10, 9 p.m. at the Captain's Bar of Mandarin Oriental Hotel. The concert showcases some of the best and most romantic songs as performed by the two artists. Call 750-8888, 721-6726 or 551-7253.

Tonight

MYMP and String of Souls at Tavern on the Square
Eight Noteat RJ Guitar Bar
Aretha and Souled Out at Merk's

Tomorrow

Ntwine at Tavern on the Square
RJ at Discovery Suites
Moonstruckat RJ Guitar Bar
Jacqui Magno at Merk's
Mocha at Bagaberde Roxas Boulevard
Wiseguys at Bagaberde Pasig

March 9

Mocha at Tavern on the Square
Bamboo at Virgin Cafe
Momentsat RJ Guitar Bar

Acoustic Jive at Merk's
Aliya Parcs at Bagaberde Pasig
U-Turn and Paolo Santos at Bagaberde Roxas Boulevard

March 10

Kearney Street at Tavern on the Square
Wiseguys and Freeway at Virgin Cafe
Tops Suzara at Aruba Bar, Metrowalk, Pasig
RJ and Friends with Members at RJ Guitar Bar
Aretha and Souled Out at Merk's

March 11

Sipol at Tavern on the Square
Freestyle and Escape at Virgin Cafe
Abrakadabraat RJ Guitar Bar
Amadeus at Merk's
Jasmine Trias at Glorietta Activity Center

March 12

Jasmine Trias at Robinson's Place Ermita

March 13

Tribe of Levi at Tavern on the Square

Dawn and Eugene at Merk's

March 14

MYMP and String of Souls at Tavern on the Square
Eight Noteat RJ Guitar Bar
Aretha and Souled Out at Merk's
Troy Montero at Bagaberde Pasig

March 15

Ntwine at Tavern on the Square
RJ at Discovery Suites
Moonstruckat RJ Guitar Bar
Jacqui Magno at Merk's
Mocha at Bagaberde Roxas Boulevard
Wiseguys at Bagaberde Pasig

March 16

Mocha at Tavern on the Square
Momentsat RJ Guitar Bar
Route 70 at Merk's
Aliya Parcs at Bagaberde Pasig

March 17

Kearney Street at Tavern on the Square
Wiseguys and Freeway at Virgin Cafe
RJ and Friends with Members at RJ Guitar Bar
Route 70 at Merk's
Side A and Sandilea at Bagaberde Roxas Boulevard
Brownman Revival at Robinson's Galleria

March 18

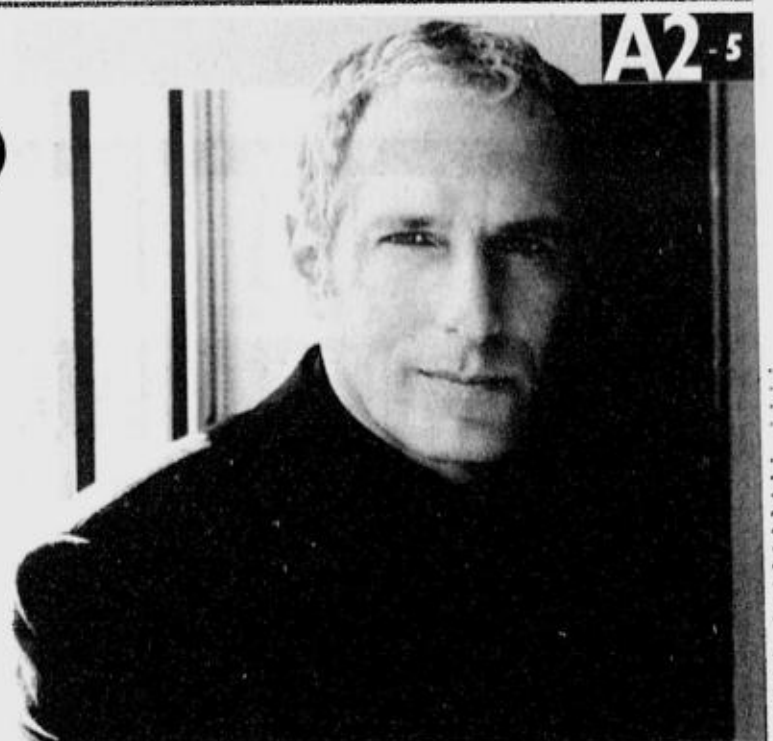
Sipol at Tavern on the Square
Freestyle and Escape at Virgin Cafe
Abrakadabraat RJ Guitar Bar
Route 70 at Merk's

March 20

Michaelangelo at Tavern on the Square

March 21

Freeverse at Tavern on the Square
Eight Noteat RJ Guitar Bar
Aretha and Souled Out at Merk's
Troy Montero at Bagaberde



MICHAEL Bolton

Roxas Boulevard
U-Turn at Bagaberde Pasig

March 22

Ntwine at Tavern on the Square
RJ at Discovery Suites
Moonstruckat RJ Guitar Bar
Jacqui Magno at Merk's
Wiseguys at Bagaberde Pasig

March 23

Mocha at Tavern on the Square
Momentsat RJ Guitar Bar
MYMP and Christian Bautista at Bagaberde Pasig
U-Turn and Paolo Santos at Bagaberde Roxas Boulevard

March 24

Mark Bautista in his first major solo concert at the Aliw Theater; 8 p.m.
Kearney Street at Tavern on the Square
Side A at Virgin Cafe
RJ and Friends with Members at RJ Guitar Bar
Route 70 at Merk's

March 25

Sipol at Tavern on the Square
Freestyle and Escape at Virgin Cafe
Abrakadabraat RJ Guitar Bar
Amadeus at Merk's
South Border and K24/7 at Bagaberde Pasig



POPS Fernandez and Kuh Ledesma

BAMBOO



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G4	GLOBE 4	1 HOSTEL	2 FEARLESS	3 FINAL DESTINATION 3 12:30, 2:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 CLOSE TO YOU
GB1	GREENBELT 1	1 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA	2 FEARLESS		
GB3	GREENBELT 3	1 HOSTEL 2:20, 4:30, 6:40, 8:50, 11:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 FEARLESS 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00 GUARANTEED SEATS		
		3 CAPOTE 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 PRIDE & PREJUDICE 12:55, 3:30, 6:05, 8:40, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA 2:30, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 HOSTEL	2 FEARLESS		
		3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2	4 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA	5 PRIDE & PREJUDICE	
ACC	AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 FEARLESS	2 WALK THE LINE	3 PRIME	4 HOSTEL
M2	MARKET! MARKET!	1 FEARLESS	2 PRIDE & PREJUDICE		
		3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2	4 NASAA SI FRANCIS	5 CLOSE TO YOU	

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ENTERTAINMENT

'Syriana' lifts veil of mystery and duplicity

SYRIANA IS ONE OF THE MOST PROVOCATIVE and compelling films we've seen in recent months. It strives to lift the veil of mystery and duplicity that shrouds life, politics, economics and the battle for supremacy in the Middle East.

A lot of sensitive toes are stepped on in the process—some of them our own—and that's a good thing because it jolts us to attention, and potential action.

Expectedly, many of the toes the movie steps on are American—more specifically those of oil company executives who bribe, conspire, manipulate and employ subterfuge and naked force to get more than their share of the oil-fueled action in that most competitive part of the world.

To bring the complex machinations down to human terms, writer-director Stephen Gaghan tells his movie's story through two principal characters—a Canadian CIA agent who sells high-powered weapons to anybody with enough money to pay for them, and an American energy analyst who becomes an Emir's powerful adviser but risks losing his family in the process.

The two protagonist-antagonists are played by George Clooney and Matt Damon, respectively. They provide a sort of black-and-white dichotomy in terms of surface values and methods, but the filmmaker's instructive point is that they're pretty much the same at heart, because they're driven by the same cupidity and quest for money, influence and power.

Clooney's character is the most experienced wheeler-dealer of the two, but even he ultimately stumbles, flummoxed by the Middle East's layers of complexity and the West's similarly sinister avarice.

The situation has become so complex that

VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre

The movie steps on a lot of toes, including our own, jolting us to attention and potential action

even the region's leaders are caught in its ever-tightening vise, sometimes with tragic consequences, especially if they sincerely wish to reform their region.

At the other end of the power grid, the film also introduces us to migrant workers who have lost their jobs due to a US-engineered fusion of two giant oil firms. Left dangling in political limbo, they reach out for power in the only way left to them: they become terrorists.

This decision ultimately makes their paths cross with Clooney and Damon's in an instructively shocking way, making the viewer realize that ostensibly unrelated bits of action are in fact ultimately parts of a web of complex interrelationships that culminate in the same thematic denouement.

Clooney is superlative in this film, because he performs radically against type. In place of his cool signature persona in his previous starrers, he presents himself here as an overweight, bearded bear, who eventually ends up as a victim, despite his cunning and experience.

Damon's take on his character is less radically different, but he too scores major thespic points because he shades his slick portrayal with dark intimations of fear and doubt that presage his own tragic involvement in the larger drama's cautionary resonances and consequences.

'Syriana' may be a different film to follow because of its presentation of seemingly unrelated bits of plot and character development. But the patient viewers is eventually rewarded when the film's overarching contexts come into focus, and the movie's provocative themes and insights make themselves shockingly clear.

Bo Sanchez

STARTING Wednesday, March 15, at 11:30 p.m., Bo Sanchez will share his inspirational stories with viewers of RPN-9 all over the country. His 'Kerygma' show will present people from all walks of life who vivify the many faces of success.

He says, "I'll point out to viewers how beautiful, special and powerful we are because God made us that way. Rissa Samson co-hosts.

Academy Awards
THE 78TH Academy Awards will be telecast on the Star Movies cable channel at 9 p.m. on Wednesday, March 8.

The event kicks off with a red carpet pre-show hosted by Claire Foran.

'Rescue Me'
AXN telecasts 'Rescue Me' every Tuesday at 11 p.m., starting on March 7. The series is inspired by events that happened during the 9/11 tragedy, and revolves around the life of a senior firefighter, played by Denis Leary.

'Yours, Mine & Ours'

OPENING on March 8 in Metro Manila, 'Yours, Mine & Ours' stars Dennis Quaid as a disciplinarian dad who meets his match in arty Helen (Renee Russo).

They used to be high school sweethearts, but went their separate ways after graduation, marrying different people. Now, 30 years later, they shock each other with the number of kids in their respective broods.

Despite this, they fall in love again, get married, and have to combine their two very different parenting styles to raise their now even more jumbled-up family of 18 kids! The consternation—and the fun, of course—is in how they have to deal with the problems and challenges that crop up from day to day, while keeping their love intact.

'Casanova'

AFTER PLAYING a gay cowboy in 'Brokeback Mountain,' Heath Ledger reestablishes his 'macho' credentials in 'Casanova.' As the movie's legendary title character, he has his way with a great variety of women—until he meets his match in Francesca (Sienna Miller), who is the only woman to turn him down—until he proves himself worthy of her romantic ideals. Lasse Hallstrom ('Chocolat') directs.

'Tango Filipino/La Divina'
BALLET Philippines sizzles with its 36th season finale, 'Tango Filipino/La Divina,' from March 17 to 19 at the CCP Dances are choreographed by Tony Fabella, Augustus 'Bam' Damiani and Alden Lugnasin, and Blackpool Dance Festival Champion Edna Ledesma embraces the true tango form. Call 551-1003 or 832-6011.

MMTA

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

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1 (DOLBY) FEARLESS PG13	1 (DOLBY) AEON FLUX	1 (DOLBY) FEARLESS
2 (DOLBY) PRIDE AND PREJUDICE GP	2 (DOLBY) PRIDE & PREJUDICE	2 (DOLBY) MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
3 (DOLBY) HOSTEL R18	3 (DOLBY) PINK PANTHER	3 (DOLBY) PRIDE & PREJUDICE
4 (DOLBY) MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA PG13	4 (DOLBY) MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA	4 (DOLBY) HOSTEL
5 (DOLBY) FINAL DESTINATION-3	5 (DOLBY) BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE-2	
6 (DOLBY) BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE-2 PG13	6 (DOLBY) FEARLESS	
7 (DOLBY) FEARLESS	7 (DOLBY) FIREWALL	
8 (DOLBY) CLOSE TO YOU	8 (DOLBY) CLOSE TO YOU	
9 (DOLBY) Nasaan Si Francis	9 (DOLBY) Nasaan Si Francis	
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CINEMA 2000	Blue Wave	Cinema 2000
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2 (DOLBY) FEARLESS	2 (DOLBY) CLOSE TO YOU	2 (DOLBY) MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
3 (DOLBY) BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE-2	3 (DOLBY) FEARLESS	3 (DOLBY) FEARLESS
4 (DOLBY) CLOSE TO YOU	4 (DOLBY) RESERVED	4 (DOLBY) SYRIANA

starmall	Mandayong	Cinema 2000
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150	tel 533.3851 / 533.3856	(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 (DOLBY) FINAL DESTINATION-3	1 (DOLBY) FIREWALL	1 (DOLBY) BLOODRAYNE
2 (DOLBY) BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN	2 (DOLBY) TEMPTRESS AFFAIR	2 (DOLBY) CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DOLBY) FEARLESS	3 (DOLBY) UNDERWORLD-2	3 (DOLBY) UNDERWORLD-2
4 (DOLBY) FEARLESS	4 (DOLBY) RESERVED	4 (DOLBY) PINK PANTHER

metropolis star	Masagana	Cinema 2000
www.clickthecity.com.ph	(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274	(Paralid) tel (044) 795.3320
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994	1 (DOLBY) Nasaan Si Francis	1 (DOLBY) BLOODRAYNE
1 (DOLBY) CLOSE TO YOU	2 (DOLBY) FEARLESS	2 (DOLBY) CLOSE TO YOU
2 (DOLBY) UNDERWORLD-2	3 (DOLBY) FEARLESS	3 (DOLBY) CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DOLBY) FEARLESS	4 (DOLBY) CLOSE TO YOU	4 (DOLBY) PINK PANTHER / WALK THE LINE
4 (DOLBY) THE MAID		

THEATRES	Cine Nepo	Lianas Cinema
HE Pacific Mall Corporation Telephone No. (044) 600-3025	(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0123	(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 (DOLBY) MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA	1 (DOLBY) FEARLESS	1 (DOLBY) MGA BATANG BANGKETA UNDERWORLD-2
2 (DOLBY) CLOSE TO YOU	2 (DOLBY) CLOSE TO YOU	2 (DOLBY) BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN
3 (DOLBY) CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN-2	3 (DOLBY) THE NEW WORLD	3 (DOLBY) CARMEN
	4 (DOLBY) THE MAID	4 (DOLBY) MGA BATANG BANGKETA NEW BLOOD

PACIFIC MALL CINEMAGIC	Cine Nepo	Fiesta World Mall
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (043) 650-3371	(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8409	(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 (DOLBY) FIREWALL	1 (DOLBY) FIREWALL	1 (DOLBY) CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
2 (DOLBY) MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA	2 (DOLBY) GOAL	2 (DOLBY) CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DOLBY) RESERVED	3 (DOLBY) MUNICH	3 (DOLBY) CRY WOLF
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED	4 (DOLBY) BLOODRAYNE / UNDERWORLD-2	4 (DOLBY) MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA

Centre Plaza Cinema	Berma Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007	(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 (DOLBY) FIREWALL	1 (DOLBY) UNDERWORLD-2
2 (DOLBY) CLOSE TO YOU	2 (DOLBY) TETENG BALIW

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1 FEARLESS MTRCB PG-13 12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00 LMF	3 HOSTEL MTRCB R-18 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00
2 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE MTRCB GP 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00 LMF	4 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA MTRCB PG-13 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00 LMF

PREMIERE THEATRE BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
MTRCB GP 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
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FINAL DESTINATION 3 12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30	CLOSE TO YOU 1:50 / 4:20 / 6:50 / 9:20	MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA 1:10 / 4:00 / 6:50 / 9:40	ONLY P129 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P149 P159
Sneak Preview - HOSTEL 1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50	BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 1:20 / 4:10 / 7:00 / 9:50	BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2 1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 9:45	

ANIMALL CINEMAS

1 CLOSE TO YOU 12:30 / 3:00 / 5:30 / 8:00	2 THE FEARLESS 12:15 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2 12:00 / 2:10 / 4:20 / 6:30 / 8:40
4 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA 12:15 / 3:25 / 5:05 / 7:55	5 Sneak Preview - HOSTEL 12:00 / 2:10 / 4:20 / 6:30 / 8:40	

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BRUCE WILLIS

MOS DEF DAVID MORSE

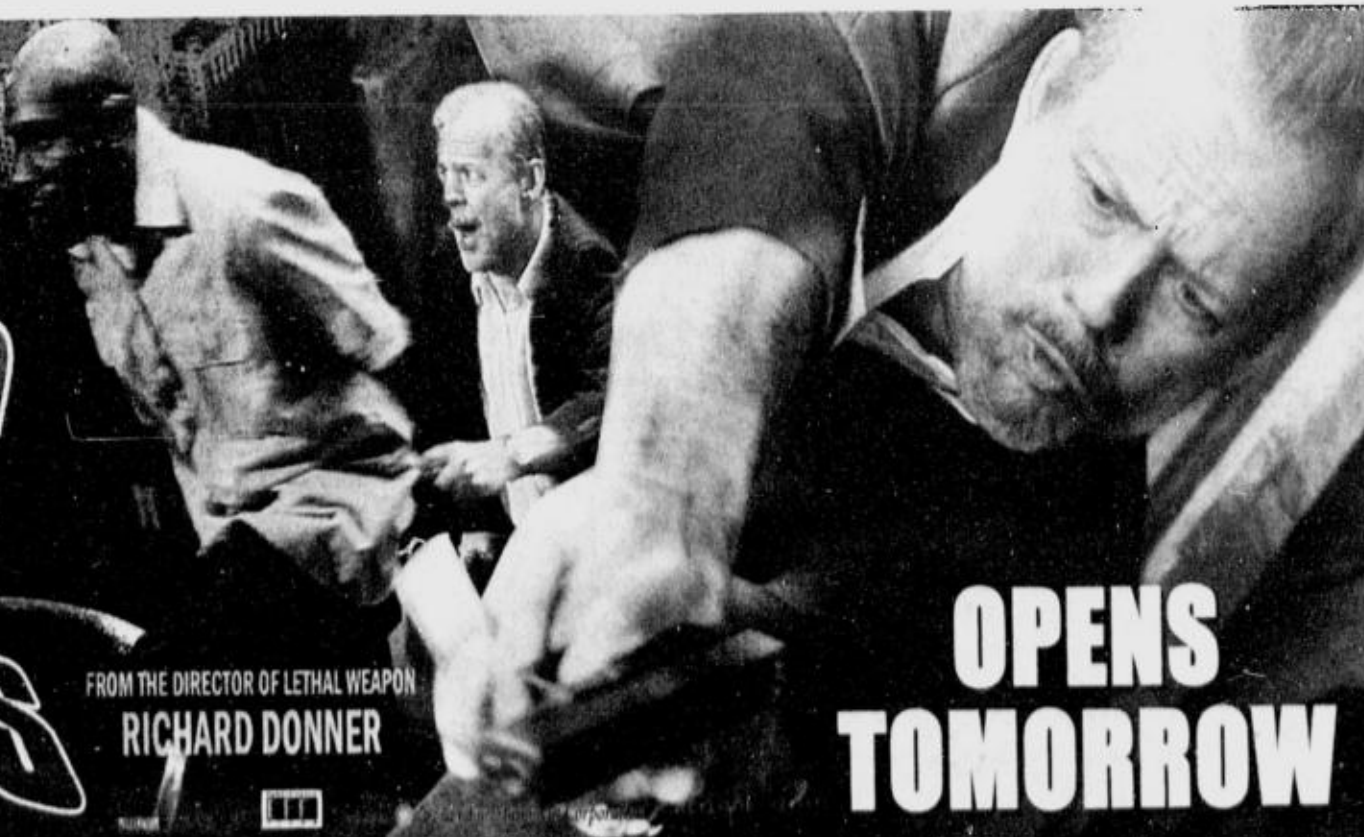
For a New York cop and his witness, the distance between life and death just got very short.

1 WITNESS...
118 MINUTES...

16 BLOCKS

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RICHARD DONNER

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BUSINESS

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Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

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Budget deficit stays below ceiling

Due to belt-tightening, higher tax collection

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT POSTED A BUDGET DEFICIT of P15.4 billion in January, or P5.5 billion lower than the P20.9-billion ceiling for the month, the Department of Finance reported yesterday.

The sharply improved budget deficit was due mainly to improved tax collection, President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday after ringing the opening bell at the stock exchange.

Ms Arroyo has pledged to balance the budget by 2010 after she rushed tax reform through

Congress last year and introduced a value-added tax (VAT), which was expanded to 12 percent from 10 percent last month.

The January figure compared with P16.5 billion in the same period last year.

The President rang the opening bell to highlight the country's

improving economic outlook after lifting her emergency rule and ending a week-old crisis arising from an alleged plot to oust her.

"The lower-than-expected expenditures for the month means we could spend more for infrastructure and education," Ms Arroyo said in a television address.

"I am hoping that the government's fiscal performance will continue to improve on the back of the accurate payment of taxes (and) aggressive collection efforts."

"The deficit figure keeps us on track of our program for the year and augurs well for our fiscal con-

solidation program," Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said in a briefing yesterday.

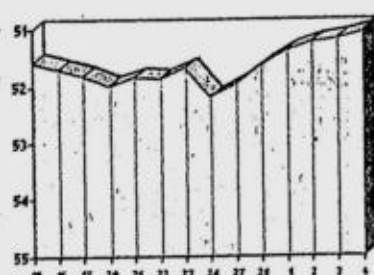
Revenues in January amounted to P72.6 billion, but expenditures were higher at P88.1 billion worth of expenditures. Revenue collection was better than the target of P69.9 billion, while expenditures were kept below the program of P90.8 billion.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue contributed P49.1 billion while the Bureau of Customs generated P13 billion in January.

The Bureau of the Treasury, to

BUDGET/B2

INDICATORS CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 51.05 = \$
As of 5 p.m., March 6, 2006

¥ 116.97 = \$
As of 5 p.m., March 6, 2006

GOLD: \$565.80-566.30

per ounce Hong Kong, March 6, 2006

STOCK MARKET

Stocks up as political tension eases

SHARE PRICES rose 0.84 percent yesterday to their highest levels in a month as political tensions eased after President Gloria Arroyo ended the state of emergency imposed to combat an alleged coup attempt, dealers said.

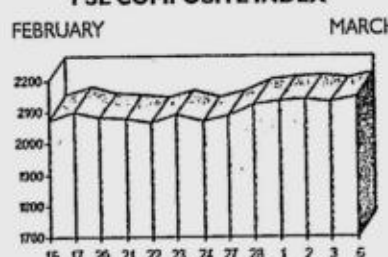
After lifting her emergency rule on Friday, Ms Arroyo rang the opening bell at the stock exchange Monday, and later announced a lower-than-expected budget deficit for January. (See story on this page.)

The composite index was up 17.95 points to 2,148.32 after moving between 2,129.72 and 2,151.48. It was the index's highest close since Feb. 2 when it settled at 2,159.37.

The broader all-shares index rose 9.51 points to 1,044.03. Gainers outnumbered losers 48 to 23, while 52 stocks were unchanged. Volume reached 639.5 million shares worth P1.77 billion.

STOCKS/B2

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

WHAT'S INSIDE

MVP boosts holdings in PLDT /B3

PNOC-EDC taking over steam plant /B5

Gov't aims to sell P2B in state assets /B6

Peso rallies, nears 51:\$1 level

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE PESO SUSTAINED ITS GAINS for the sixth straight session to close near the next key psychological barrier of 51 against the dollar Monday.

The local currency hit an intra-day high of 51.045 before closing at 51.05, its strongest finish since ending at 50.66 to a dollar on July 25, 2002.

Now at a new three-and-a-half-year high, the peso gained another 13 centavos from Friday's closing of 51.18 as volume traded at the Philippine Dealing System amounted to \$605.5 million.

"The peso strengthened in anticipation of a possible break out of the 51 lev-

el," said Lito Biacora, a currency dealer at Bank of the Philippine Islands.

It got a further boost after the government said it expected the fiscal deficit to fall to 2.1 percent of the country's gross domestic product this year, from 2.8 percent of GDP in 2005.

"It's sending good signals that the government is managing its deficit well," said a chief dealer in a Manila-based bank. "We see the peso going higher on expectations that if this continues then there may be a credit rating upgrade down the road."

Biacora said there was a chance that the peso would appreciate to the 50:\$1 level within the week, citing favorable

political developments since the lifting of the state of national emergency on Friday as well as the strengthening of other currencies in the region.

Once the peso breaks the 51:\$1 barrier, Biacora said there might be some support for the greenback at about 50.80 as corporations might be interested to buy since the US dollar had not fallen to these levels against the peso in a long time.

The dealer said the peso could hit 50 to a dollar in the coming months. April and May are usually bullish for the peso as many Filipinos living abroad send money home at this time of the year to fund their children's education before the start of a new academic session.

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* CAMPI Results 2005
Promo runs until March 31, 2006. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1203, Series of 2006

Pacquiao switches diet to fight-o-chemicals

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO waited for the Secretary of Defense to advise her when to lift the state of emergency but he just sat on de fence. So she lifted it herself and guess what? It weighed only 3 ounces. It wasn't just one resignation that bothered her, it was the fort behind it. It seemed like the whole event was Cory-o-graphed.

In two years' time, oil companies will have to produce blended petrol with 5-percent ethanol. I wrote to my old chemistry teacher, Ethel Chloride, to get advice. She said that they will have to modify the engine and that will call for great engineering. But diesel be

way it has to go—to be able to use cane sugar—cane and abel.

With millions of unemployed, there should be no shortage of contestants for Philippine Idle. According to DOLE, who is either the Department of Labor and Employment or a large pineapple-canning company, there are lots of jobs looking for workers.

On Saturday, I watched Binibining Pilipinas on my large flat screen. Before the swimsuit competition, my wife insisted that I take my blood pressure tablet, which is blue. Unfortunately, she gave me VIA-GRA. After 30 minutes, she said, "I can't see. Put your knees down." I replied, "My knees are down."

MR. BEARBULL



Ron Nathan

I have an upwardly mobile phone. I initially stuffed it into my sock, which is quite feet at my age, but it rubbed against my ankle so I put it in my trouser pocket. Then I read it could affect my sperm count. I did not believe it but after a month, I had a sample checked and there were 3 missing. So I transferred it to the breast pocket of my shirt, but heard it could cause arrhythmia, so I put it in my hat. Unfortunately, the radiation destroys the neurons in the brain so in desperation, I attached it to the tip of my umbrella. The problem is that I can only hear it when it is raining.

I bought my wife a cookery book. She thinks that baking is a city in China.

I apologize for missing last week, but under order 1017, my article had to be sent first to the President and it missed the deadline. She texted me that she was not worried about what I might write as I always make it a point to stay out of politics. She just wanted to be the first to read the jokes.

The market 8 days ago had a borderline-low risk factor and it went up sharply in the following 3 days in anticipation that the state of emergency would soon be lifted. Unfortunately, on Friday, ahead of her broadcast, there were 2 small explosions in Pasig. The PHISIX abruptly went into reverse, falling from plus 8 to minus 11 points in just a few minutes. It made a slight recovery but still closed 7 points lower. The peso, however, went from strength to strength with a large volume of business transacted.

On Wednesday, foreign brokers were net buyers of P250 million, on Thursday P300 million, and on Friday P100 million. Most of the buying was in AC, ALI, GLO, TEL and BPI. I listened to an overseas fund manager and he said that when investing in third world countries, he looked at the economics and ignored the political turmoil that was frequently in the background.

He referred to the Philippines but said that fiscal policies had been implemented and that the deficit should decline steadily over the next few years. He was, therefore, increasing his weighting from 0.7 percent to 4 percent, a remarkable display of confidence.

He pointed to Thailand where Prime Minister THAKSIN has been charged with corruption and lost the support of his own party. THAKSIN went to the King, dissolved parliament and has called

for a general election to take place shortly. The same thing happened to Prime Minister KOIZUMI several months ago when he lost the support of his cabinet members. He called for a new election and won handsomely.

In Germany, Chancellor SCHRODER was unexpectedly defeated by a woman who now rules the country with only 34 percent of the votes. In France, last year, the Prime Minister was replaced after a spate of car burning by immigrants, who claimed they were treated as second-class citizens even though they were born in France.

In the UK, Tony BLAIR is so unpopular over British troops in Iraq, that he might not finish his term as leader of the Labor Party. In the US, President BUSH has the lowest confidence level of any American President, 32 percent. The electorate disapproves of the war in Iraq, which has caused more than 2,000 soldiers to die and 20,000 more injured. They also disapprove of his handling the economy and they are worried about pensions, Medicare and the continued loss of jobs in manufacturing.

All in all, people all over the world have become disillusioned with politicians, and the most stable countries appear to be China, Russia, Malaysia and Singapore. In these countries, there is little or no opposition, yet economically they are growing much faster under socialism.

China is now shifting away from the expansion of the towns and concentrating on the hitherto neglected rural areas where there had been 87,000 demonstrations of unrest. This means a necessary redeployment of funds, which will now find its way to villages in the more remote parts. So the building of roads, bridges and electrification of villages will require huge amounts of cement, copper, steel, etc. The commodity market should remain firm. The forecast GDP growth for 2006 is 8 percent, slightly lower than 2005, but the government tends to be conservative and anyway, it is a fantastic growth rate.

In Europe, the central bank has raised rates by 0.25 percent to 2.5 percent, the highest in 3 years, and warned of more hikes to come. In the US, BERNANKE is expected to raise rates again in March to 4.75 percent and to 5 percent in May.

The BIR hit its February target and for the first 2 months, it collected P89 billion, 21 percent more than a year ago. It should be easy for the government to bring down the deficit to P125 billion this year.

Late Oscar news

Last year, Million-dollar baby got her back broke: This year, Brokeback Mountain continues the saga. mrbearbull@hotmail.com

SM Prime posts 8% growth in 2005 profit

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SM PRIME HOLDINGS INC. OF mall tycoon Henry Sy reported an 8-percent growth in net income in 2005 to P4.97 billion from P4.62 billion in 2004 due to rental revenues from new malls.

It said gross revenues rose 7 percent to P10.9 billion in 2005 from P10.2 billion in 2004. Rental revenues accounted for P9.03 billion, up 10 percent from the previous year's P8.18 billion.

SM Prime will open by May this year its biggest mall dubbed the Mall of Asia. Located on a 60-hectare property overlooking Manila Bay, the 386,000-square-meter complex consists of four buildings linked by elevated walkways—the Main Mall, the

North Parking Building, the South Parking Building and the Entertainment Center Building.

The main mall will include shopping and dining establishments, the Food Court, and the country's first Olympic-size ice skating rink. The North Parking Building will house the SM Department Store and half of the 5,000 parking spaces, while the South Parking Building will include the SM Hypermarket and more dining areas.

One of the mall's main attractions is the Entertainment Center Building, which will offer a spectacular view of the bay from its row of trendy restaurants, but which will also house bowling and billiard facilities, and 10 theaters, including a director's club and the country's first IMAX theater.

Budget deficit ...

From page B1

which state-owned firms remit dividends for the government, collected P5.9 billion, while other state offices contributed P4.3 billion.

The BIR's collection for the month failed to meet its P50.1-billion goal. The shortfall came despite the reduction of its January target from the original P53.1 billion. But revenue collections by Customs and the Treasury more than offset the BIR's shortfall as they exceeded their targets of P12.1 billion and P4.4 billion.

Cautious spending allowed the government to keep expenditures below program, although the target was made tighter than expected because of delays in the passage of the

proposed 2006 national budget.

But Beltran said that compared to last year's spending behavior, the government will operate relatively loosely this year to help boost economic growth now that its fiscal position is improving.

"This (belt-tightening) is not what we intend to do this year. This time we want the economy to grow, but the pump-priming will still be within the parameters set under the budget program," Beltran said.

Fiscal authorities earlier said the government would allot 30 percent of the proceeds of the VAT Reform Law, which raised the VAT rate and expanded the coverage of the tax, to pump-priming activities.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE					
(As of March 6, 2006)					
	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
STOCKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	34.5	36	34.5	36	417,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	59	60	59	59.5	2,429,000
China Banking Corp.	655	665	655	665	240
Citibank Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	300
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.46	0.46	2,370,000
International Exch. Bank	65.5	65.5	65	65.5	317,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25.5	25.5	25	25	41,200
Philippine National Bank	34.5	36	34.5	35	693,900
Security Bank Corp.	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	5,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	13,000
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankart Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	60,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	3240	3240	3240	3240	130
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	150	150	149	149	3,400
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2210	2210	2210	2210	100
Ivanhoe Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	850,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	43	43.5	43	43.5	28,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	13.25	13.25	12.75	12.75	91,300
Manila Electric Co. A	19.25	19.5	19	19	3,500
Manila Electric Co. B	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.5	45,200
Manila Water Co. Inc.	4.45	4.6	4.5	4.6	1,174,000
Petron Corp.	0.92	0.92	0.91	0.91	4,490,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	130,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	7,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	38.5	38	38	38.5	32,400
Jollibee Foods Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	159,300
Pancake House Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	61.5	62	61.5	62	25,000
San Miguel Corp. A	83.5	83.5	82	82.5	95,000
San Miguel Corp. B	18	18.25	17.75	18	187,300
Universal Robina Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	3,507,200
Vitacore Corp.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	530,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	800,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.1	4.25	4.1	4.25	650,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	900,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	5,000
Panasonic Mfg Phil Corp.	0.44	0.5	0.44	0.5	4,710,000
Steniel Manufacturing	347.5	350	345	347.5	195,900
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	350,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	4.85	5	4.85	5	384,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.44	2.46	2.44	2.46	900,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	2,400
APC Group Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.88	0.88	550,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	2,430,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3	3.05	3	3	54,000
Filinvest Dev Corp.	2.06	2.16	2.06	2.12	165,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	3,924,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	200,000
Medco Holdings	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	10,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	200,000
Multitech Inc. Corp.	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	17,070,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	1.05	1.06	1.06	1.06	10,000
Primex Holdings Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	280,000
Solid Group Inc.	225	225	223	224	533,220
SM Investments Corp.	0.73	0.74	0.73	0.74	170,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	70,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	11.25	11.5	10.75	11.25	2,311,400
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	0.96	0.97	0.96	0.96	2,750,000
Belle Corp.	0.96	0.96	0.95	0.95	180,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	1,600,000
Cityland Development Corp.	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	270,000
Crown Estate Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1,624,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.68	1.7	1.68	1.7	30,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.88	0.93	0.88	0.93	50,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	20,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. B	0.23	0.23	0.225	0.23	3,740,000
Cyber East Land Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	2,100,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	20,000
Ever-Gotoco Resources	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	5,000,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.22	1.22	1.2	1.2	1,128,000
Interlink Res.	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	1,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.21	0.215	0.21	0.215	2,040,000
FL-Estate Land Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	580,000
Marshall Cons. Inc. B	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	500,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.46	1.48	1.44	1.44	3,100,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.34	8,630,000
MFC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.35	0.38	0.35	0.37	5,260,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	29,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	3,100,000
SM Development Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	20,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.9	8	7.8	8	114,279,000
Unimove Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	350,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	23,300
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	420,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	860	870	855	865	14,070
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.2	3.25	3.2	3.25	1,064,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1840	1845	1830	1835	66,840
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.17	0.175	5,560,000
ionics Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	18,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	1,400,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.049	0.05	4,500,000
Philweb Corp.	0.026	0.027	0.026	0.027	84,500,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Aboltiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	1,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	11.5	12.25	11.5	12.25	1,560,500
Kapell Phils. Marine Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.97	0.97	230,000
Loranzo Shipping Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.37	1.38	3,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acacia Phils Hotel Corp.	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	2,000,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.78	1.78	1.76	1.76	862,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	740,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	5,000
People Inc.	3.1	3.15	3.1	3.15	92,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Paxys Inc.	8.3	8.4	8.3	8.3	2,001,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.96	0.97	0.96	0.97	320,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	10,000
Albra Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	20,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev'l	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.21	1,208,000
Lepanto Cons. Min. Co. A	0.23	0.26	0.23	0.26	20,000
Lepanto Cons. Min. Co. B	0.016	0.016	0.015	0.016	5,700,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	20,000,000
Omico Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.68	1.72	2,450,000
Philix Mining Corp. A	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	4,846,000
Philix Mining Corp. B	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	39,800
Samirara Mining Corp.	0.24	0.24	0.235	0.235	3,220,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	216,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	33,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.46	0.47	0.46	0.46	340,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	50,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	9,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	4,000
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	4,000

DISCLOSURES

REPUBLIC Glass Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 28, 3 p.m. at the 6th floor, Republic Glass Building, 19

SBMA gets to issue ECCs anew; investments seen to flow easier

By Ronnel W. Domingo

INVESTMENTS ARE EXPECTED TO flow easier at the Subic Freeport after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources agreed to restore the authority of the local agency to issue environmental compliance certificates.

The DENR and Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority last January signed a

"fine-tuned" memorandum of agreement that restored SBMA's mandate to issue ECCs.

Under the agreement, the responsibility of issuing ECCs to businesses operating in Subic would be given back to the SBMA Ecology Center.

The DENR will then provide technical support and validate the ECCs the SBMA has issued.

The MOA contains the amendments to

a memorandum of understanding that dealt with the issuance of ECCs, which the DENR and SBMA signed in 2005.

The MOU though, had to be reviewed and amended, before it could be made into an agreement.

SBMA Administrator Armand C. Arreza said locators in Subic no longer have to worry about the issuance of ECCs, adding that the SBMA-processed permits "would be more efficient and

faster."

Also, the MOA provides that any investor who plans to set up a business in Subic could go directly to the SBMA Ecology Office for the entire process—from application for an ECC, to technical review and evaluation, to the actual release of the permit.

Last month, Arreza announced that three more Taiwan-based companies that were hoping to expand their South-

east Asian operations, had looked into the possibility of putting up projects in Subic.

Arreza said the firms' representatives visited Subic last January to look for suitable locations for the planned projects.

Earlier, 10 firms have committed a total of \$1 billion in new investments shortly after Taiwanese economic minister Ho Mei-yueh came to the country for a joint economic forum late last year.

MVP boosts holdings in PLDT

Telco chair now owns P380.3 million worth of stocks

By Daxim L. Lucas

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan further increased his holdings in the country's largest telecommunications firm, sending a signal to skeptical investors that he is willing to put his money where his mouth is.

PLDT disclosed to the stock exchange last week that Pangilinan bought an additional 1,050 shares of the company he runs at prices ranging from P1,810 to P1,830 apiece.

The acquisition cost Pangilinan P1.9 million, and brings up the total value of the PLDT stock he owns to P380.3 million, at yesterday's closing price of P1,835 per share.

Pangilinan's bullish stance comes amid criticism from influential investment banks and research firms that PLDT's earnings prospects are threatened by in-

creasing competition and the expected slowdown in the wireless communications sector.

PLDT earned P34 billion in 2005—a record high for the company. But the firm has conceded that its earnings this year may be muted by the need to rechannel its efforts into developing new business lines that will ensure its earnings stream in the future.

Pangilinan's confidence in his own firm helped boost the stock price during trading on the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday.

PLDT ended the session up P10 from the previous day's close of P1,825, with a total of P122.8 million worth of shares changing hands.

Yesterday marked the third consecutive trading session where PLDT saw its share price increase.

PLDT was the third most actively traded stock yesterday.

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- Coordinate security activities for all Philippines based operations.
- Proactively and reactively conduct security audits.
- Manage various security and alarm systems controlled by the regional 24-hour console in Singapore.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Degree holder from a reputable university.
- Preferably with a 3-4 years working experience in the same field or its equivalent.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills (English)
- Sound knowledge of security systems, computer and related technologies and its applications.
- Can work in highly stressful situations while remaining calm and professional.
- Proven interpersonal skills.

Interested applicants must send their updated resumés with 2x2 photo to P.O. Box 1196, Makati Central Post Office
Attention: Vice-President, Human Resources



PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merrill Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City 1634
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5285 & 5288

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

Description of Items - Purchase Requisition No. Approved Budget
Various Control Valves Spare Parts Under FGT 51938/ PHP 2,279,000.00
FGT 51939/ FGT 51941/FGT 51943/ FGT 51946
Seamless Coil Capillary Tubing Under GQ 516720R1 PHP 21,200,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o the following buyers: Roderick R. Cabantog and Anthony E. Cirilaco starting February 28, 2006, from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on March 8, 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to and registered with the PNOC-EDC Procurement and Materials Management Division, at the above address and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than 2:00 p.m. (Procurement Department Office Wall Clock time) on March 22, 2006. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

(PDI-Feb. 28 & March 7, 2006)

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OBITUARIES

"There is an appointed time for everything,
and a time for every affair under the heaven..." Ecclesiastes 3:11



FLORENCIA COTONGCO vda de MANZANO

Peacefully joined her Creator
on March 1, 2006 at the age of 94
at St. Vincent Medical Center, Los Angeles, California.

Her children Belen, Efigenia (Baby), Jose, Cornelio (Lito), Gavino, Alberto & Florencio; in-laws, grandchildren, great grandchildren, brother Vitalico, nephews and nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains will be flown to the Philippines today, March 7, 2006 and will remain in state at the family residence in Asingan, Pangasinan.

Interment will be on Saturday, March 11, 2006 at 9 o'clock in the morning at Heaven's Gate Memorial Park, Asingan, Pangasinan.

In Loving Memory on the Eight Death Anniversary of FILOMENA L. CONTRERAS

November 22, 2006 - March 7, 2006

Holy Masses will be offered today, March 7, 2006
at the following:

Santuario de San Antonio	Forbes Park, Makati City	7:30 AM
St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori	Magallanes Village, Makati City	7:00 AM
Our Lady of the Abandoned	Sta. Ana, Manila	6:30 AM
Santuario de San Jose	Greenhills, San Juan	7:15 AM
Mary The Queen	Madison Street, San Juan	7:00 AM
St. Joseph Parish	Proj. 3, Quezon City	7:00 AM
Immaculate Concepcion Parish	Lantana St. Cubao, Quezon City	7:00 AM
Christ the King Seminary	E. Rodriguez, Quezon City	7:00 AM
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church	Lipa City, Batangas	6:00 AM
San Sebastian Cathedral	Lipa City, Batangas	6:00 AM
Don Bosco Parish Church	Pasay Road, Makati City	7:00 AM

We, her Family, request relatives, friends and pious
readers to join us in prayer for the eternal repose of her soul.

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In loving memory 1st Death Anniversary RICARDO "DING" CASTRO CRUZ

We remember our beloved, Papa and Lolo born June 3, 1948 and joined our Creator March 7, 2005. Not a day goes by that we never think about you. We all miss your laughter, the way you try to keep the love in our family, and the way you take care of all of us ... From your wife Edna, children and grandchildren, Trisha, Willy and Sabine Cuason, Lally, Chris and Lance Dizon, and Martin, Janice and Marcus Cruz.

Masses will be offered at:

Our Lady of Consolation Parish, Alondras St., Miranila

Homes, Tandang Sora, Quezon City, 5:00 p.m.

Holy Family Parish, East Capitol Drive, Barangay

Kapitolyo, Pasig City, 6:00 p.m.

Sta. Clara Parish, Aurora Blvd., Quezon City, 6:00 a.m.

San Bartolome de Novaliches Parish, 6:00 a.m.

12:15 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Our Lady of Anunciacion Parish, Mindanao Avenue,

Quezon City, 7:00 p.m.

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Alfredo P. Manrique

(1949-2006)

passed away in the Grace of the Almighty
on March 3, 2006 at the age of 56.

His loving wife **Maria Lourdes Lauzon**, only son **Dio**, mother **Clarita**, only brother **Eduardo** and family request relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Saint Peter Memorial Chapels, Quezon Avenue, Quezon City. A necrological Mass was celebrated in the evening, Monday, the 6th of March. His remains will be cremated today, March 7, 2006.

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

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KALAW : 528-0213, 527-3342
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Atty. ANTONIO Z. MAGABO

Peacefully joined the Lord
on March 5, 2006 at the age of 61.

His wife, Emelita, and his children, Alfred, Angela and Annaliza, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel J, La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on March 9, 2006 at the Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City after the 8 a.m. Mass

In Loving Memory on the Tenth Death Anniversary of our Beloved "IMA",

DOMINGA SANTOS vda de SUÑGA

who joined her Creator
on March 8, 1996.



Holy Masses will be offered at:

San Nicolas Parish, Macabebe, Pampanga	6:00 AM
Presentation of Our Lord Parish, Batasan, Macabebe, Pampanga	6:00 AM
Sto. Niño Parish, Sto. Niño, City of San Fernando	5:30 AM
Blessed Trinity Parish, Pilar Village, City of San Fernando	6:00 AM
Santuario de Sto. Cristo, Blumentritt, San Juan, M.M.	6:00 AM
St. John the Baptist Parish, Pinaglabanan St., San Juan, M.M.	7:15 AM
Holy Family Chapel, Greenhills, San Juan, M.M.	12:15 AM
Santuario de San Jose, Mandaluyong City	7:15 AM
St. Joseph Shrine, Aurora Blvd., Cubao, Q.C.	7:00 AM
Our Lady of Light Parish, Cainta, Rizal	7:00 AM
Corpus Christi Church, Alemany Blvd.	6:00 AM
St. Mary's Cathedral, San Francisco, Calif.	9:00 AM
St. Andrew Church, Daly City, California	7:00 AM

The family requests relatives, friends and the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul. Thank you.

DEATH NOTICE

Dr. STEPHEN G. REYES

Died on March 1, 2006

His body lies at St. Therese of Child Jesus Chapel, UP College, Los Banos, Laguna.

Interment will be on March 12 to a place to be announced later.

\$5 hotel room levy opposed

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE HOTEL INDUSTRY IS OPPOSING bills that seek to raise funds for tourism promotion projects through the imposition of a hotel room levy worth \$5 per room per visit.

Hans Hauri, general manager of the Marco Polo Plaza in Cebu, said all hotels were already spending portion of their revenues to bring in tourists. If the government would insist on the levy, it must also give tax credits to in-house promotion spending, he said.

Former Tourism Secretary and now Senator Richard Gordon filed a bill proposing the \$5 per room levy, while the Lower House has its own version seeking a \$1 levy.

Hauri said the country's association of hotels would launch strong opposition to the proposal.

Assuming a 60-percent occupancy rate for Marco Polo Cebu's 329 rooms, the tariff will cost the hotel as much as P18 million a year. The levy, he said, could not be passed on to its guests.

Hauri, who was based in Shanghai before coming to the Philippines, said the bill must have been a copycat of a similar \$1 per room levy charged in Shanghai to subsidize some underground construction.

The Marco Polo Plaza in Cebu is the second hotel of the Marco Polo group in the Philippines. The first is in Davao.

PNOC-EDC taking over steam plant

BOT deal governing CalEnergy-operated facility in Leyte expiring

By Abigail L. Ho

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL Co. Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) is scheduled to take over the CalEnergy-operated 125-megawatt (MW) Upper Mahiao geothermal facility in Leyte in June.

PNOC-EDC vice president for operations Marcelino Tongco said the build-operate-transfer (BOT) plant would finally be turned over to the state firm upon the expiration of the BOT agreement on June 26.

He said PNOC-EDC and CalEnergy were currently discussing issues related to inventory in the geothermal plant and legal matters related to the transfer. The state firm is also conducting performance testing in the plant.

These should all be done within the month, he said.

CalEnergy and PNOC-EDC were also working on resolving some preventive maintenance issues, he added.

To ensure a seamless transition, he said PNOC-EDC was prepared to absorb 35 of the 40 CalEnergy personnel in the facility.

The Upper Mahiao facility, completed in 1996, sold 100 percent of its capacity to PNOC-EDC

for resale to National Power Corp.

Power generated by the plant is distributed in Cebu via an underwater transmission cable.

It is owned and operated by CE Cebu Geothermal Power Co. Inc., which is wholly owned by CalEnergy parent firm Mid-American Energy Holdings Co.

Apart from the Upper Mahiao project, PNOC-EDC manager for engineering, procurement and construction Martin Jude Lacambra said another plant would be turned over to the state firm. He said Marubeni Corp. would transfer the 50-MW Mindanao II power plant to PNOC-EDC in May 2009.

PNOC-EDC president and chief executive Paul Aquino said that while the state firm had never missed a BOT payment, it still had to depend on parent firm PNOC or the national government for the necessary capital investments.

With the last of its BOT payments to be made in 2009, he said PNOC-EDC was "near the end of our cash hardships."

From this year to 2009, PNOC-EDC needed P2.9 billion to fully pay its BOT contracts and to fund its working capital requirements.



UNLIMITED CALLS FROM JAPAN
Frontier Call of Japan and Globe Telecom sign an agreement that will allow unlimited calls from Japan to the Philippines. The deal was signed by (from L) Frontier Group president Yoichiro Miyake, Frontier chair Eri Miyake, National Telecommunications Commission Commissioner Ronald Oliver Solis, Globe consumer business head Ferdinand de la Cruz, Globe corporate and regulatory affairs head Rodolfo Salalima.

FBMA spending \$5M to expand shipyard

By Irene R. Sino-Cruz
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—FBMA MARINE Inc., which is based in Balamban town, plans to invest \$5 million for the expansion of its shipyard to accommodate additional projects.

Iker Aboitiz, director and chief financial officer of FBMA Marine, said the company was planning to build a larger slipway as it was expecting to get more projects starting this year.

Aboitiz said the plan would cost \$5 million and would call for an increase in the company's workforce.

FBMA, he said, was starting to get more projects because the shipyard had already gained recognition in the global ship-building industry.

Doug Border, FBMA president and chief operating officer, said the Balamban shipyard was globally competitive.

"We compete against the very best. We have already established our credibility in the world market," Border said.

"We have the track record to show we could build the vessels on time. In terms of cost, we are very, very competitive. Our customers get (the vessels at) low cost but at exactly the same quality they get from other yards," Aboitiz said, adding that these

were the reasons for FBMA's increasing orders.

Aboitiz said that the cost per man-hour in the FBMA shipyard was eight times lower than those in Holland and Australia.

Border said the shipyard had a low margin to play around in terms of costing since the labor component constitutes only 20 percent of the total cost.

"The workers here are much better. The British Navy ordered three patrol vessels from us (FBMA) and three from Scotland, ours turned out much better, according to three or four different people," he said.

FBMA also bested a Dutch company for a contract involving the building of the first-ever commercially produced vessel designed by Lockheed Martin, said to be the world's largest defense contractor.

FBMA launched last Saturday the first of the two vessels, which were contracted by by Mexican state oil firm Pemex.

The vessel, which boasts of computerized stabilizing systems designed to cope with extreme weather conditions, costs about \$9 million and was built in 12 months.

Aboitiz said this was a major development for the company since the vessel was the first of its kind to be commercially produced.

The prototype of this vessel was built in Hawaii in 1997.

Aboitiz said FBMA was talking with Lockheed Martin for the building of two other vessels of the same design.

FBMA was founded in 1996

as a joint venture between Aboitiz and Co. and FBMA group, owned by Hong Kong Parkview Group and later sold to Babcock International group. Aboitiz acquired 100 percent ownership of FBMA in 2004.

IBC-13 privatization facing further delay

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE LONG DELAYED PLAN TO privatize two state-run broadcast firms face even further delays after employees of the International Broadcasting Corp. demanded for the payment of benefits that have accumulated for several years now.

IBC-13 supervisors and directors union president Sam Cordova said the sequestered station's management owes union members a total of P600 million—a sum that any prospective buyer may now have to pay.

"This [amount] includes retirement benefits, unpaid benefits under our collective bargaining agreement, and unpaid SSS and Pag-ibig premiums," he said in a telephone interview with the INQUIRER.

The station—which was sequestered by the Presidential Commission on Good Government in 1986 from Marcos ally Roberto Benedicto—is one of the assets being offered by the government for sale, along with another sequestered station, Radio Philippines Network.

Cordova, who heads one of the two IBC-13 unions, said employees were dismayed with the privatization plan put forward by the government and its adviser CLSA Exchange Capital Corp. since it was vague on how the employees' rights will be protected.

"The details are not clear," he said. "According to them, it will

depend on the privatization council. They will decide our fate."

According to Cordova, the most likely scenario will be one in which the eventual buyer of the station will fire all its employees and rehire only those deemed vital in the operations of the privatized firm. IBC-13 employees are even amenable to this plan as long as their financial demands are met, he said.

"We want reassurance of full payment," the union chief said, stressing that the employees are in favor of an equitable privatization plan.

The employees' main worry is that only the station's assets and real estate assets will be sold to private buyers, leaving the employees' fate hanging.

"Under this plan the payables to employees will not be paid," he said.

Last week, PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan said he was exploring the possibility of buying into either RPN-9 or IBC-13, or both, but said that he was more interested in their assets rather than in the complete companies.

IBC-13's problems echoed similar issues with RPN-9's unpaid obligations.

Yesterday, the finance department said the privatization of RPN-9 would not push through as scheduled because the sequestered television station still had to settle back taxes with the Bureau of Internal Revenue and address issues concerning its workforce.

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BUSINESS

Gov't aims to sell P2B in state assets

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT has raised by 300 percent its target revenue from the sale of state assets this year, as it expects to seal several deals on big-ticket items with potential investors.

Finance Undersecretary Gabriel Singson Jr. told reporters that the original target of P500 million was small, given recent accomplishments in privatization.

Government now expects to generate P2 billion in the privatization of state assets.

Singson noted how Robinsons Land Corp. yesterday paid the government P573 million for the sale of a property in Paco, Manila. The property was owned by Manila Gas Corp., a subsidiary of National Development Co.

Singson said Robinsons intended to use 3 hectares to build a residential property and establish a shopping mall on another hectare.

The agreed amount of P573 million was lower than the P637-million floor price originally set by the government. But Singson said it already met the standard of the Com-

mission on Audit.

He said COA requires that in any privatization initiative, the government should get at least 90 percent of the floor price.

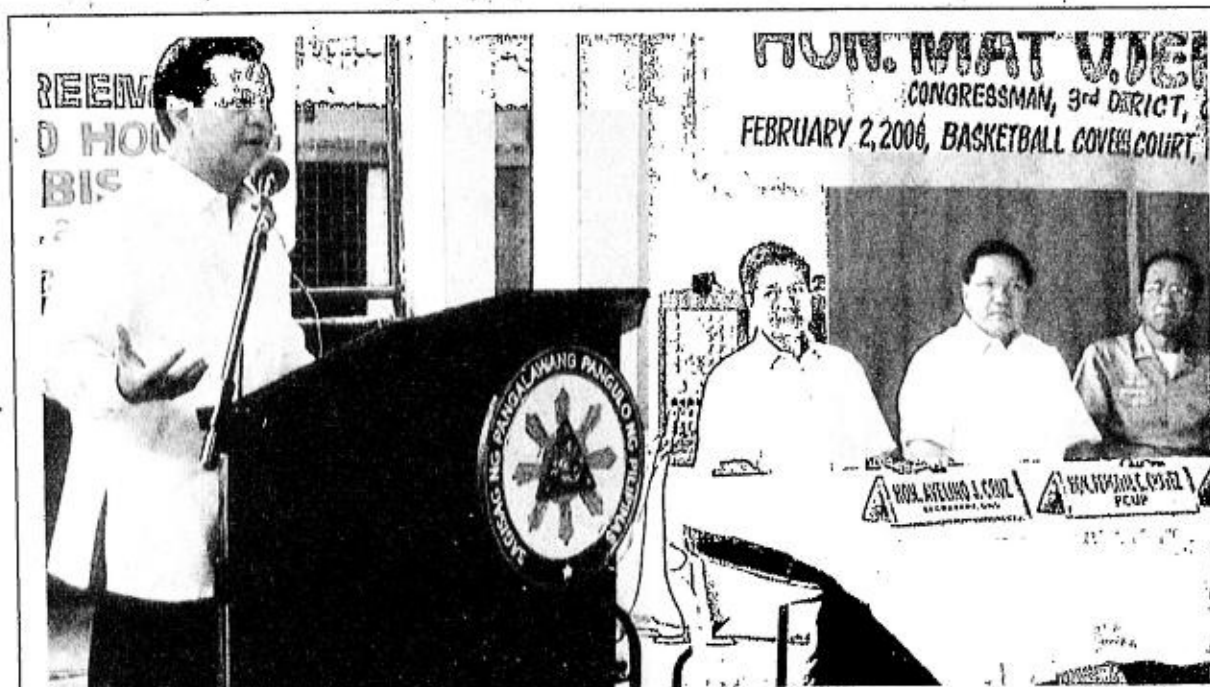
Of the P573 million, P300 million will go to state coffers while the remaining P200 million will go to Manila Gas.

Singson also reported that the government has received offers from two prospective buyers for the purchase of the 4.8-hectare property in Makati City where the International School used to stand.

The former owners of the property had donated the land to the government.

The two bidders are Century Properties, owned by Joey Antonio, the country's special envoy to China, and the AMA group of Amable Aguiluz.

Singson said the government has set a floor price of P1.186 billion for the former IS property, but the offers of the two potential buyers were even higher. He said 80 percent of the proceeds of the property sale will go to the government, while the remaining 20 percent will go to IS.



LAND FOR SOCIALIZED HOUSING

The Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) recently turned over a 5,434-square meter lot at Camp Atienza in Libis, Quezon City to some 150 families. Vice President Noli de Castro (standing), is shown addressing the heads of various agencies that include BCDA President Narciso L. Abaya (seated, center), Admiral Ariston delos Reyes of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (extreme right) and Percival Chavez of the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor (seated, left).

GMA urged to persuade firms to list up

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

LOCAL BROKERS ARE asking President Macagapal-Arroyo to use her "moral suasion" in urging companies to list on the local bourse.

Shortly after Ms Arroyo paid a visit to the Makati Stock Exchange, Veteran stockbroker Irving Ackerman said that the government should urge companies that have posted strong earnings and shown continuous growth, like Pilipinas Shell, to conduct an initial public offering.

Yesterday marked the second time that the President paid a visit to the stock exchange this year.

Lure investors

"We have been trying to get Shell to get listed on the board," Ackerman yesterday told reporters. "[The oil firm] have not agreed to list yet. I hope it will come soon."

In order to lure investors to conduct an IPO, companies should also offer their shares at a low price.

So far, only one company—energy producer First Gen Corp.—has braved an initial public offering this year.

Situation normal

Ms Arroyo visited the Makati Stock Exchange yesterday morning to ring the morning bell that will open trading for the day.

The President also met briefly with some Makati brokers and PSE officials before the morning rites.

The composite index opened weak, but managed to close 18 points up to 2,148.32.

First Grade Holdings Inc. managing director Astro del Castillo said Ms Arroyo went to the stock exchange to assure investors that the situation was back to normal.

She also encouraged investors to park their money in stocks, particularly in government financial institutions (GFIs).

No speeches

Like her visit last month, Ms Arroyo made no speeches.

PSE president Francis Lim earlier said that market conditions are conducive for increased investor appetite, given a stronger peso, a more robust market for initial public offerings and waning fiscal concerns.

Also, analysts lauded the credit outlook upgrades announced by Fitch Ratings and Standard & Poor's, which bolstered the country's image among foreign funds.

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Chevron begs off from selling biodiesel

By Abigail L. Ho

LIKE THE COUNTRY'S TWO BIGGEST oil firms, Chevron Philippines Inc. (formerly Caltex Philippines Inc.) is not keen on selling pre-blended coco-biodiesel directly from its pumps.

In a position paper submitted to the House of Representatives in late December last year, the company expressed its "regret" that it can not support pending bills that aims to make mandatory the sale and use of pre-blended coco-biodiesel.

Chevron said more tests had to be conducted on the fuel to make sure that it would not cause damage to the oil firms' storage tanks and vehicle engines.

Coco methyl ester (CME), the oil firm said, required special handling procedures to ensure that there would be no bacterial growth in its tanks, which would otherwise affect

its product's quality.

"No tests have been conducted on the long-term effects of CME-blended diesel ... on our storage tanks, particularly whether [CME] will increase the rust and corrosion rate of the tanks," Chevron said. "Moreover, we are apprehensive that offering CME, a relatively untested product in Philippine conditions, [may] unduly exposes both our retailers and the company to consumer complaints and, worse, legal liability."

The oil firm explained that the long-term effects of CME-blended diesel on vehicles' fuel injectors had yet to be determined. Should there be any malfunctions, it had not been made clear who would take the blame: The government, the oil companies or the retailers.

Also, Chevron noted that all the products it sold in its stations had al-

ready undergone "a battery of tests the world over," allowing the oil firm to guarantee quality and performance.

CME, however, has yet to undergo enough tests to merit an endorsement from the oil firm.

"In view of all the foregoing ... we regret we cannot support the passage of these measures until our concerns have been addressed," Chevron said.

In an earlier interview, Petron Corp. president and chief executive Khalid Al-Faddagh said the oil firm still had a lot of "technical concerns" on CME-blended diesel, especially if this would be sold directly from its dispensing pumps.

Also, Pilipinas Shell said that it wanted more tests to be done on CME. One of Shell's concerns with regard to selling CME had to do with the stability of the product, according to a company official.

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LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY 2BU • THURSDAY FOOD • FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

How to prepare for a walkathon

SEN. PIA CAYETANO IS, HANDS-down, the fittest lawmaker in the country. She literally walks, cycles and swims the talk of fitness.

No surprise then that, as chair of the Compañero Rene Cayetano Foundation, she launched the Pinay in Action program in celebration of Women's Month.

The health and fitness program seeks to emphasize the need to prevent lifestyle diseases that primarily affect women. The foundation will conduct running, biking, and general fitness clinics for women, culminating in a run/walk event on March 19.

Walkathons are a popular way to raise funds for charity. They are also favorite events of corporations and organizations. So Senator Cayetano asked me to research on how a sedentary person should prepare for a walkathon.

I found practical advice in an article, "Healthy Women Take 10," written by Robin Warshaw for the National Women's Health Resource Center's e-newsletter.

Warshaw interviewed podiatrist Noreen Oswell of the Cedars

Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles as well as Werner Hoeger, professor of kinesiology and director of the Human Performance Laboratory in Boise State University.

Why prepare

Walking two or five kilometers (common distances for a walkathon) should be no big deal because the average person in decent shape can do it in 30 and 60 minutes, respectively. But, as a podiatrist and volunteer physician at walkathons and marathons, Oswell knows firsthand that inactive (and sometimes overweight) women may be prone to foot-related injuries like heel and arch pain and tendonitis because they are unprepared for the physical demands of these walking events.

Her most important training tip is, "Start walking slowly before walking quickly. Then build up the miles."

Another benefit of preparing for the event is it can help people lose some weight (if they keep

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan



their caloric intake unchanged) and, hopefully, it will motivate them to continue walking as part of a regular exercise regimen long after the event is finished.

Training program

Ideally, one should prepare for a walkathon at least four to six weeks in advance, according to Hoeger. He recommends two training schedules.

2-km walkathon (four-week schedule with fourth week ending on walkathon day)

- Week 1: Walk in 10-minute sessions, three times a day, for four days.

- Week 2: Walk in 15-minute sessions, two times a day, for four days.

- Week 3: Walk in 20-minute sessions, two times a day, for four days.

- Week 4 (when Saturday is walkathon day): Walk one 30-minute session on Monday and Wednesday, walk one 20-minute session on Tuesday and Thursday, skip Friday.

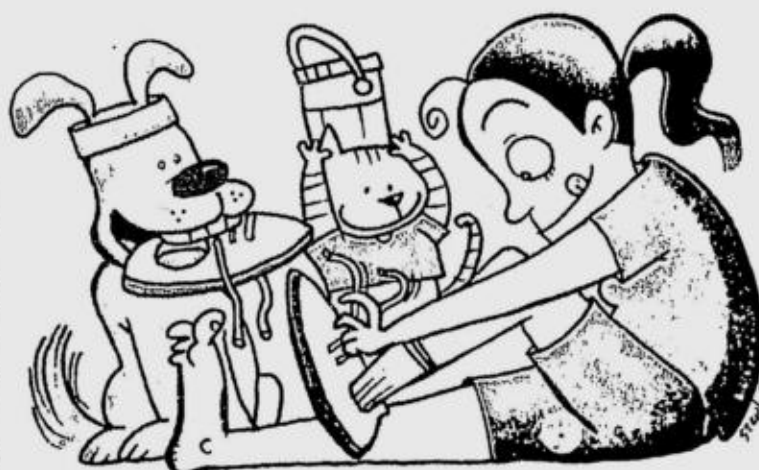
5-km walkathon (six-week schedule, with sixth week ending on walkathon day)

- Weeks 1 through 3: same as for 2-km event.

- Week 4: Walk one 30-minute session, for five days.

- Week 5: Walk two 20-minute sessions per day on Monday and Wednesday, one 30-minute session on Tuesday and Thursday, skip Friday, and walk one 50-minute session on Saturday.

- Week 6 (when Saturday is walkathon day): Monday and Wednesday, walk one 30-minute session in the morning and one 20-minute session in the afternoon; Tuesday and Thursday, one 20-minute session; skip Friday.



Walk this way

Walking may be a natural movement but good posture will help prevent injuries and improve performance. Here are key points of proper walking posture from Prevention Magazine, a leading advocate of walking programs.

- Look six feet in front of you.
- Keep your head level; ears should be over shoulders. Drop your shoulders.
- Relax your arms and swing them forward as if each were a pendulum.
- Bend your elbows to an 85- to 90-degree angle.
- Don't let your hands come

across your body.

- Keep your abs firm but not so tight that you can't breathe.
- Tuck your pelvis slightly by bringing your belly button back toward your spine.
- Lift up and out of your hips to allow more swivel.
- Point knees and toes forward, keeping your feet parallel.
- Roll from heel to toe; avoid falling to the inside or outside of the foot.
- Push off with your back foot.

For more details on Pinay in Action, call 5526683, 5529003 and 0927-4045187.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Modified hand-to-toe pose



THIS IS AN EASIER version of the hand-to-toe yoga pose (hand holding the toes with the raised leg extended straight). It develops balance, strengthens the muscles of the supporting leg, and stretches the buttocks and inner thighs of the raised leg.

Equipment:

None

Exercise technique:

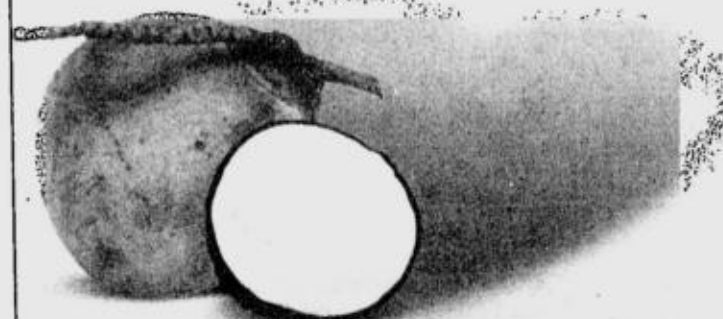
1. Stand with your legs together. Place your left hand on your hip.
2. Raise your right knee and place your right hand underneath your thigh.
3. Stand tall as you pull your knee as high as you can. Use your arm to keep it steady. Stay in this position for three to five breaths.
4. Move your leg to

the side and hold it there for three to five breaths.

5. Slowly lower your leg to the floor. Repeat on the other side.

Performance tips:

1. One breath equals an inhalation and an exhalation. Keep your breaths steady and consistent in length and depth.
2. Gaze at a single spot in the distance to help you maintain your balance.
3. Keep shoulders relaxed and pressed down away from your ears.
4. An even easier modification is to hold a chair or table instead of putting your hand on your hip. As your sense of balance and your muscles get stronger, progress to hand on hip.



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Beauty, wellness seminars

FESTIVAL SUPER-mall presents "Fit & Fabulous," a celebration of beauty and wellness, this March.

On selected weekends from March 10-26, hair and skin care, acupuncture and chiropractic, medical and dental care seminars will be conducted at the mall's second level Carousel Court. Free massage and blood sugar analysis will be offered.

An exhibit of works by body painters Alnor Collantes, Alfred Galvez and Sam Tena-so will be held March 10 and 18-19. Body painters will hold demonstrations March 11-12.

The Nestea Green Tea Sanctuary will offer free head, back or hand massage with a free cup of Nestea Green Tea March 18-19.

On March 26, Sphere Gym is staging Aero Marathon, with prizes in cash and kind.

Call 8503514. Festival Supermall is at the Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa.

MEDICard The Healthcare It Deserve!

What is Colo-Rectal Cancer?

Colo-Rectal Cancer is a common epithelial malignancy, occurring most frequently in the large intestine including the recto-sigmoid area. It is the 5th most common type of cancer among Filipino males and 7th among Filipino females. A number of established risk factors for colo-rectal cancer have been identified, to include familial adenomatous polyposis, chronic ulcerative colitis, familial cancer syndromes, family history and high meat and fat intake, low fiber intake. Common symptoms are rectal bleeding, change of bowel movement, tenesmus, narrowing of the stool, pallor, anorexia, nausea and vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, occult blood, mass in the abdomen, intestinal obstruction and peritonitis. In diagnosing this disease, patients will undergo different screening procedures like physical examination with digital rectal exam, proctosigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy and barium enema (when necessary). Treatment of colo-rectal cancer would depend upon the stage and site of the tumor. In the early stage, surgery is indicated while in late stage of the cancer, patients are managed by palliative surgery and palliative chemo-radiotherapy. Lastly, patients will have a series of follow-up physical examinations (PE) every 4 months for 3 years, every 6 months for 2 years and then annually. Other work-up will be suggested by your doctor.



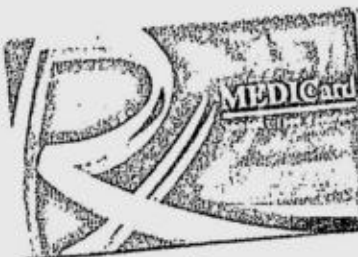
This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our medical service provider at The Family Clinic Inc. in Manila, Dr. Noreen T. Salang Jr. Dr. Nicky as he is commonly called by his patients is a specialist in Surgical Oncology. He earned his medical degree from University of St. Thomas in 1996.

Salang is the former President of the Philippine Society of Oncologists and in the Surgery Department of Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center. He is also the current President of the International College of Surgeons. During his spare time he plays tennis and golf. MEDICard members may visit him for consultation services at The Family Clinic Inc. Mondays thru Fridays from 1:00pm to 4pm.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions in health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphs.com for your inquiries on health matters.

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Take Charge Doc!



Nicky

"With Svenson, I won't be threatened by hair loss!"

"I've always had thick hair but a few years ago, I panicked when I was threatened with heavy hair loss! I thought something was very wrong when my hair was thinning and I saw a lot of fallen strands. I never had this problem in my whole life until that moment. I didn't try creams or ointments to solve it. I went to Svenson right away. In just a few treatment sessions, my hair started to have the body it had before. Now it's at the peak of its fullness. I don't even tease it to add volume. With Svenson, I won't complain about hair loss anymore!" - Eva Abesamis, Designer

For women's hair loss concerns, call Svenson today for a free hair and scalp check-up.

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BY JESS ABRERA



BY PM. JUNIOR



BY PATRICK McDONNELL



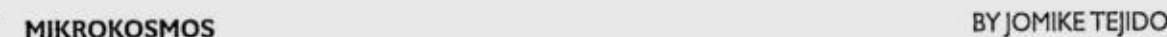
BY STEVEN PARALINAS



BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are a very sensitive, giving person. People appreciate this about you. You believe that people should be decent to each other. Your high ideals always influence your choices. Your kind-hearted sympathy always wins you friends. Increased solitude will allow you to learn something important this year. Give this to yourself.

Birthdate of: John Heard, actor; Ivan Lendl, tennis player; Laura Prepon, actress.



 **ARIES** (March 21 to April 19): I suggest you use tact and diplomacy when dealing with others today. Why? Because it is very easy to fly off the handle! (You suddenly are excited about something, and you want to win with your point of view.)

 **GEMINI** (May 21 to June 20): You feel willful in your discussions with close friends or partners today. Don't let things become a win/lose proposition. Lighten up!

 LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): A friend seems to be quite pushy today. Possibly, you are the pushy one with your friend? Either way, keep the friendship by keeping the peace. You won't regret it.



TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Be very careful when shopping. Perhaps you should delay major purchases for another day. You seem to be obsessed about possessions and money today. (It's not a good frame of mind to be in to part with your cash.)

 **CANCER** (June 21 to July 22): Somebody has ideas about how to improve things at work. You might not agree. This is not the time to make a big stink about this. Just be gracious.

 **VIRGO** (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Bosses, VIPs and authority figures are very firm about something today. You might not agree. This is not the day to tackle this. Step back and wait for a better time.



 **LIBRA** (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): It's easy to get into arguments about politics and religion today. But you will only be preaching to the choir—or to deaf ears! Why bother? Don't even go there.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a poor day to share something or decide how to divide an inheritance or some shared property. People are very territorial and opinionated today. (Yikes!)

 **SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Power struggles with someone close to you could arise today. Try to see where you might be part of this equation. After all, it takes two to make a fight.

 **CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might have excellent ideas about how to make improvements where you work. Nevertheless, don't be forceful with co-workers. Don't be pushy.

 **AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Parents must be patient with children today. Little ones can have temper tantrums. Nothing can cure hard feelings faster than a hug. (Just remember that.)



PISCES (Feb. 19 - March 20): Make a special effort to be easygoing with family members today. Don't insist on things going your way. Compromise is your best solution now.

BY DANIEL SHELTON



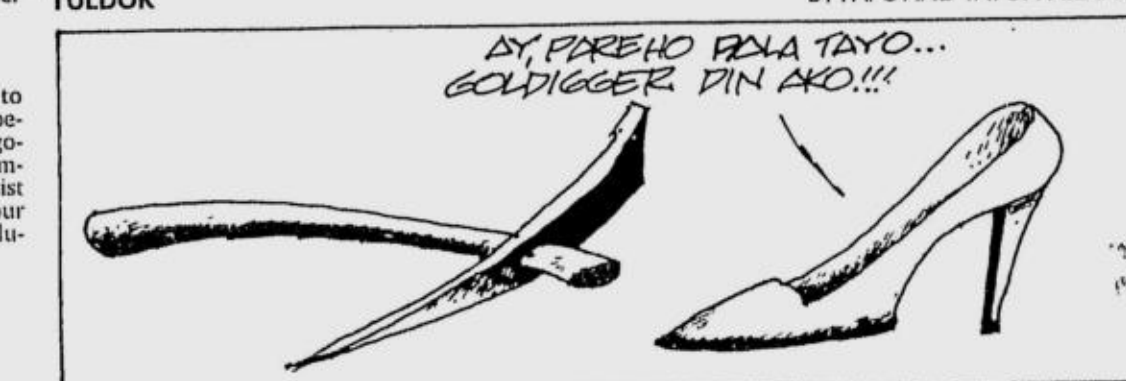
BY MANIX ABBERA



BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO



BY RABLI AND TATLIM MİLAMBİLİNG



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50 Treasured
52 Get In the way
53 Crucial
54 Muse of poetry
55 Very influential
person
56 Designer
Noouch!

60 Mythical queen
of Carthage
61 Ages and ages
62 Doctor's pic
64 I highs
65 __, transit gloria
mundi
66 Goddess of
folly

DOWN	36 Behind
1 Pulled off	37 Marquee name
perfectly	38 Support for
2 Lug around	glasses
3 Muscat's land	40 Tractor-trailer
4 Ill will	41 Norwegian king
5 Gas additive	42 Papery sushi
lottery	wrapper
6 Part of ETA	43 Italian luxury-
7 Ms. Gorbachev	goods maker
8 Owns up to	48 Mr. Krivleff
9 "Can Wait"	49 Harancue



WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS: Winners of the adorable puppies Greggry Vera Cruz of Woman Today and moi, with (from left) Singapore Tourism Board-Phil's Jaylynn Malabayoc and Liza Gonzales, debonair area director Rocson Chang, and PR maven Nancy Harel

Doggies in the window

AS USUAL, *palanggas*, the hard-to-beat Singapore Tourism Board-Philippines (STB-P) turned their Chinese New Year appreciation function, already an annual tradition, into a fantastic event, spearheaded by tall, dashing, brilliant director Rocson Chang, no less.

The event was organized to thank media pals for their support.

STB-P often invites media people to the enchanting Lion City to cover special events. STB-P is known for its innovative programs and for being one of the most dynamic tourism offices in town.

Tons of us were buzzing with excitement at the lavishly decorated Crowne Plaza ballroom because, as with most STB events, you just didn't know what to expect, dahlings.

Superbly hosted by witty and fun DJs, Chico and Delamar, the event opened with a stunning and breathtaking number by the extremely talented dancers of world-class Ballet Manila, under prima ballerina Lisa Macuja-Elizalde.

Then STB-P director Chang presented a video production of the dramatic, awesome growth of Singapore tourism, *palanggas*.

For one thing, the number of Filipino visitors to Singapore rose from 176,574 in 2003 to 319,639 in 2005. That's really wow, *di bala?*

"The excitement lies in what

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice
Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen
using Kodak EasyShare
system

the future has in store for Singapore. Prepare yourselves for the Great Singapore Sale in... July," Rocson C. told us.

Then the real fun started with the Chinese tradition of Yu Sheng salad tossing. It is believed that the higher the ingredients are tossed, the greater the luck.

With all the energy in that room, moi was tossing the salad so high and in all directions that people at my table had salad on their faces and hair. Oooops!

Après, we dug into the super excellent lauriat lunch. Chill-out time was with the fab Silly People's Improv Theater a.k.a. SPIT. Their quick wit and creativity had us in stitches, especially the hilarious dog beauty pageant and the comical three-headed fortune teller.

Since it is the Year of the Fire Dog, the grand finale was "How much are the doggies?" contest, which got our adrenaline skyrocketing. Two adorable puppies were on display, a yellow Labrador descended from cham-

pions and a cuddly little Shih Tzu, each with its own super luxury kit that included shampoo, coat brushes, and toothbrushes, plus two enormous bags of dog food.

We were to choose a puppy and guess the price of the dog, the cage and starter kit. The estimate closest to the actual price would win the entire package and, *naturellement*, the adorable puppy.

Loads of attendees called and sending text messages to friends to help them guess the prices. Moi did the same.

The exciting news flash of the contest was the closest estimate for the divine little Shih Tzu belonged to... yes! Yours truly, *palanggas*. My educated guess of P25,140 was the closest to the actual price of P25,695. The announcement of the winner blew my socks off.

The adorable yellow Lab now belongs to the witty and fun Greggry dela Cruz of Woman Today, whose guess of P21,650 was off by only P150.

Winners, too, were three lucky people who won fab round-trip air tickets, plus accommodations, to captivating Singapore. Five other lucky guests won limited-edition Uniquely Singapore Monopoly sets.

Hey, *palanggas*, the Singapore Tourism Board definitely knows how to organize great affairs that are absolutely enjoyable and unforgettable. A delightful after-

noon of fun, excellent food and great company proves that STB-P events are always fresh and unique, just like the Lion City.

No wonder, the Lion keeps smiling at the harbor, *palanggas*.

Men 'on the rise'

For a change, the men were at center stage, *palanggas*, when pharmaceutical giant, Unilab, through its marketing division Biomedis, paid special tribute to the Filipino male at the awesome launch of its newest product, Andros. It was an elbow-to-elbow happening at the NBC Tent at The Fort, *natch*.

Over 900 distinguished doctors were *très* visible during the event that featured three of the country's hottest macho celebrities: ageless, debonair Eddie Garcia; star-maker Ronnie Henares; and multitasking actor/director/producer and model dad, good-looking Albert Martinez.

And that woman who is the grand authority on sex and relationships, Margie Holmes, no less, offered advice on "what being a man on top means," *palanggas*.

Included in the tribute were men of the Philippine Urological Association (PUA), Phil. Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP), Phil. College of Physicians (PCP), Phil. College of Surgeons (PCS), and Phil. Society for the Study of the Aging Male (PhiSSAM), Unilab's solid partners in allowing more men to be "on the rise."

Après the socializing and the excellent food catered by the elegant Mandarin Oriental Manila, Unilab chair, woman of power Jocelyn Campos-Hess, and the honorees raised their glasses of bubbly to toast Andros, "Unilab's answer to low erection quality."

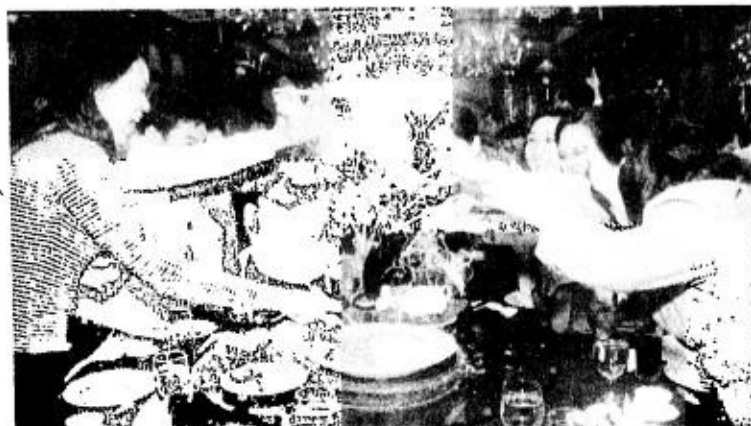
The smashing launch was directed by talented Jackie Aquino and superbly organized by LEN Plus Inc., headed by its secret weapon, Marilen Nunez. Publicity was by top PR Edd Fuentes, but who else, dahlings?

"Confidence, power, control... qualities that define the man who aims for the top, gets there and stays there! We can now look forward to the rise of Filipino men!" said the dynamic Margarita Holmes.

Not bad, huh? Check it out, all you guys with "rubber band" problems. Ooops!



NANCY Harel and Associates' top PR ladies Bheng Loretizo, Docker Cavestany, Aisa Gamo and Niza Forschler



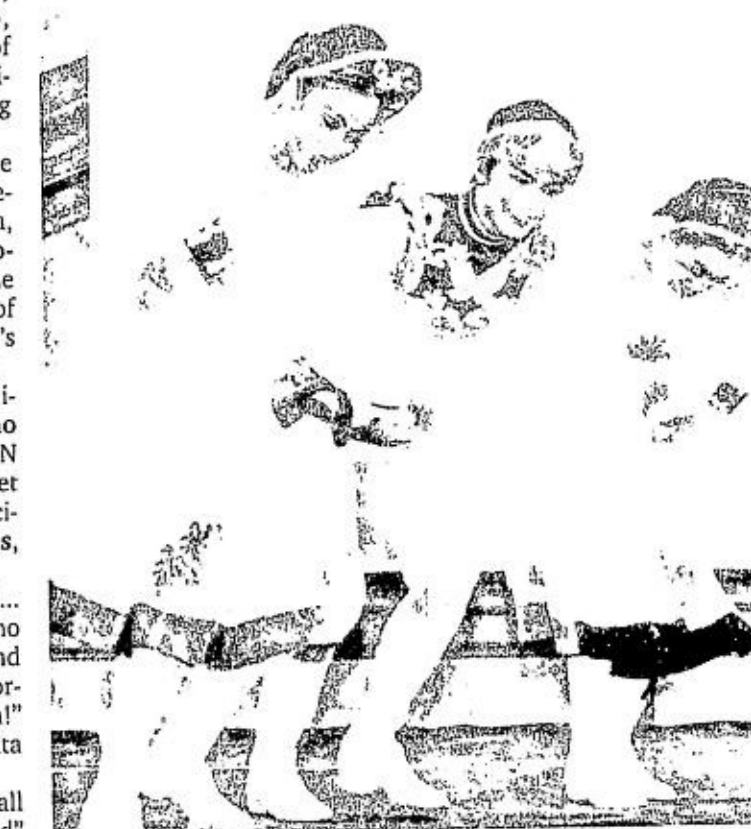
TRAVEL agents and media persons energetically toss the Yu Sheng salad for great luck and prosperity.



"HOW much are the doggies in the window?" Media guests guess the prices of cuddly Shih Tzu and yellow Labrador puppies.



THE HILARIOUS SPIT's "Great Oracle," with Bibsy Mercado, had us in stitches.



A CAPTIVATING Russian dance completed the three-segment number of the fab Ballet Manila.



UNILAB's vice chair Clinton Hess, chair Jocelyn Campos-Hess, and SVP for R&D Dr. Kennie Dee, with former POGS president Dr. Greg Pastoride, and Phil. Society for the Study of the Aging Male (PhiSSAM) president Dr. Jose Albert Reyes



CINDY Kurlito with Biomedis operations manager Rudy Flores



CYBER smart Andros brand manager Marjorie Co



HOT, macho celebrities Albert Martinez, Ronnie Henares and Eddie Garcia with the fabulous Dr. Margie Holmes



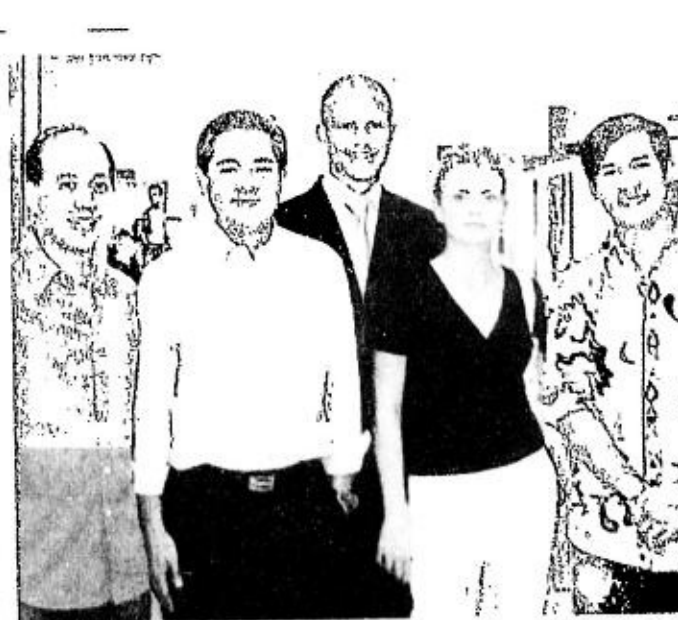
BIOMEDIS CME specialists Rex Pilarta and Jun Sulit



BIOMEDIS district manager Jon Marcos



BIOMEDIS VP-GM Dr. Eugene Ramos, and Biomedis operations manager DJ Macomb



Erratum

In this photograph that appeared in this column on March 3, the caption should have read: "Businessman Dennis Littonjua; Arthur G. Coronel, Cinderella CEO; Frederick Famm, Electrolux top man, and his wife Anna Famm; and Richie Santos, young VP of merchandising for Cinderella." We regret the error.

LIFESTYLE

C4

The simplest way to stay healthy

By Anne A. Jambora

THE WORLD HEALTH Organization reports that 3.5 million children under 5 years old die each year from diarrheal and respiratory diseases. More than 80 percent of the deaths are attributed to unsafe water and poor hygiene and sanitation practices.

A study by Dr. Anna Beatrice Bowen of the Foodborne and Diarrheal Diseases Branch of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) in Atlanta, Georgia, United States, shows that hand-washing reduces the risk of acquiring both childhood diseases by as much as 40-50 percent.

"Hand-washing is the single most simple and inexpensive thing we can do to protect ourselves," Bowen says.

An expert on the occurrence of diseases, Bowen conducted extensive studies on the effects of hand-washing in many developing countries, including Pakistan, Guatemala and China. She was among 150 health experts invited by Procter & Gamble to the recent 2nd International Health and Hygiene Symposium.

Not number but when

Bowen says it is not the number of times a person washes his/her hands that matters but when, such as after using the toilet, before cooking or before eating.

She adds, close attention should be paid to the nails, as bacteria can be hidden there.

"Use antibacterial soap. Wash all surfaces of the hands, including the front, back and between all the fingers. Dry hands on a clean handkerchief, and clean your environment by throwing away trash and sweeping the floor," Bowen says.



DR. TIM Long

PHOTOS BY RYAN LIM

Hand-washing must last for 20-30 seconds, she says. Even when there's a short supply of clean water, Bowen says hand-washing is still better than not washing at all.

But developing the habit is not simple.

Education

In her five-month study in the Fujian Province of China, Bowen noted the importance of hygiene education.

P&G, she says, has been actively promoting hand-washing in grade school in China since 1995. To date, the company has already directly reached 80 million schoolchildren in 550 cities.

Bowen says the program includes teach-

ers receiving an hour-long hand-washing and hygiene training from P&G staff. Teachers then pass on to their students what they learned from the training.

Kids get take-home kits with a small bar of soap, toothpaste, a board game about hygiene and a hygiene booklet for parents.

However, Bowen says behavior change may not always last and participants may return to their old habits. Or the behavioral change may be incomplete, such as failure to wash the hands at key times.

"Influencing behaviors surrounding hand-washing can be very difficult. We have seen from other studies performed by P&G that changing hand-washing behavior is possible on a small scale, with intensive follow-up," Bowen says.

Children are at a high risk of catching germs due to their hand-to-mouth behavior. They like to play close to the ground. Developing proper hygiene and sanitation practices, however basic, must not be lightly taken.

P&G brand manager for global Safeguard franchise Ivan Chuavon says, in the Philippines, more than 50 percent observe proper hand-washing every day and take daily baths.

Still, Dr. Tim Long, global technical external relations manager of P&G Beauty, says, "We hope the government will consider hygiene and sanitation as important components to include in the educational program."

Safeguard, P&G's flagship brand in the Philippines, is celebrating its 40th year of promoting health and hygiene among Filipinos. Long says the partnership of health organizations in the world helped accomplish P&G's vision of improving lives.

For almost nine years now, a national health and hygiene program, Kalinisan, Kalusugan, Kaunlaran (KKK), has been reaching out to barangays across the coun-



DR. ANNA Beatrice Bowen

try. The KKK is jointly undertaken by P&G, United Nations Children's Fund, Philippine Association of Medical Technologists, Department of Education and Culture, Department of Health, Philippine Hospital Association and Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas.

The KKK aims to reduce the incidence of hygiene-related diseases by highlighting the importance and practice of the Three Steps to Good Health—hand-washing, bathing and keeping surroundings clean.

E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph

Children, in particular, can avoid killer diseases by just washing their hands

Coincidences are more frequent now than before

COINCIDENCES HAVE fascinated thinkers and researchers from the time of Aristotle over 2,000 years ago up to Carl Gustav Jung's in the 20th century.

Dr. Jung even gave such mysterious occurrences a new name: synchronicity, which he defined as the "meaningful and simultaneous occurrence of two unrelated events." For example, you are humming a song that is not popular and all of a sudden you hear it on the radio.

What makes coincidences so intriguing is the fact that their simultaneous occurrence does not have an obvious causal connection but they are meaningful to the person concerned.

James Redfield's immensely popular book in the '90s, "Celestine Prophecy," dealt with coincidences extensively. When one begins to notice so many coincidences in one's life, that means the prophecy is about to be fulfilled, according to Redfield.

Amusing

Let me relate an amusing series of coincidences that happened to me recently. Occasionally, I come across people in restaurants, schools and other social gatherings who ask me for my autobiography.

I am not used to this type of attention or recognition that is accorded only to movie personalities and other celebrities. So I developed a standard line or remark when this happens just to make people laugh.

When asked for an autograph, I tell the person, "Bakit kayo nag papa-autograph sa akin? Hindi naman ako si Richard Gomez? Kamukha lang!" This has never failed to elicit laughter because it is obviously ridiculous! I definitely don't look a tiny bit close to the handsome and macho-looking Richard. It is meant only as a joke.

I don't know him personally and have no intention of meeting him. I don't even watch his films or television appearances.

Anyway, in November last year, Cory Quirino and I conducted a seminar on Total Wellness in Baguio City. During breakfast at the coffee shop of Manor Hotel in Camp John Hay, Cory came up to me and said, "Jimmy, guess who is at the other table over there?" I replied, "Who?" "Richard Gomez!"

That was a big surprise to me; it was as if my joke came alive and caught up with me. Even Cory didn't know that joke. So I told her and she laughed loudly. Then she excitedly said, "Come on, let's go there and I'll introduce you to him."

I told her I had no intention of

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licaucio



meeting the actor, but she insisted saying, "I know him. Come on!"

So I did. He was with a movie director. They were shooting a film in Baguio. After the usual amenities, we had a picture taken with Richard and that caught the attention of his fans who swarmed all over him as we retreated to our table to finish our breakfast. I never told him the joke.

Lecture

Only three or four weeks after the incident, I was invited to give a lecture on Whole Brain for employees of the HSBC Call Center in Ayala Alabang. Attending the lecture was the company's vice president for marketing, a Mexican-American. He was seated at the front row.

Now, I normally don't tell my joke about Richard Gomez in a Whole Brain workshop, but somehow, during the open forum, I thought of telling the story. The laughter of the audience was deafening. The reason: the name of the vice president seated in front was Richard Gomez!

What are the odds that within a short period of only four weeks, I will bump into two persons named Richard Gomez?

Since there is no such thing as a causeless event, how do we account for occurrences that do not seem to have any logical cause? Is it possible that coincidences are part of a long series of events whose ends we are only seeing, but which are far removed from the original cause?

There are four hidden laws of nature as I discussed in a previous column, namely, the law of affirmation, compensation, attraction and causality. The law of causality says "anything has a cause." There is no such thing as a coincidence.

Yet it is undeniable that coincidences do happen and in greater frequency now than before. Does this mean that there is a growing consciousness or expansion of awareness among people that enables them to recognize such events as springing from some unknown depths of their psyche or mind?

For info on seminars or workshops I conduct and books I have written, call 8107245 or 8926806.

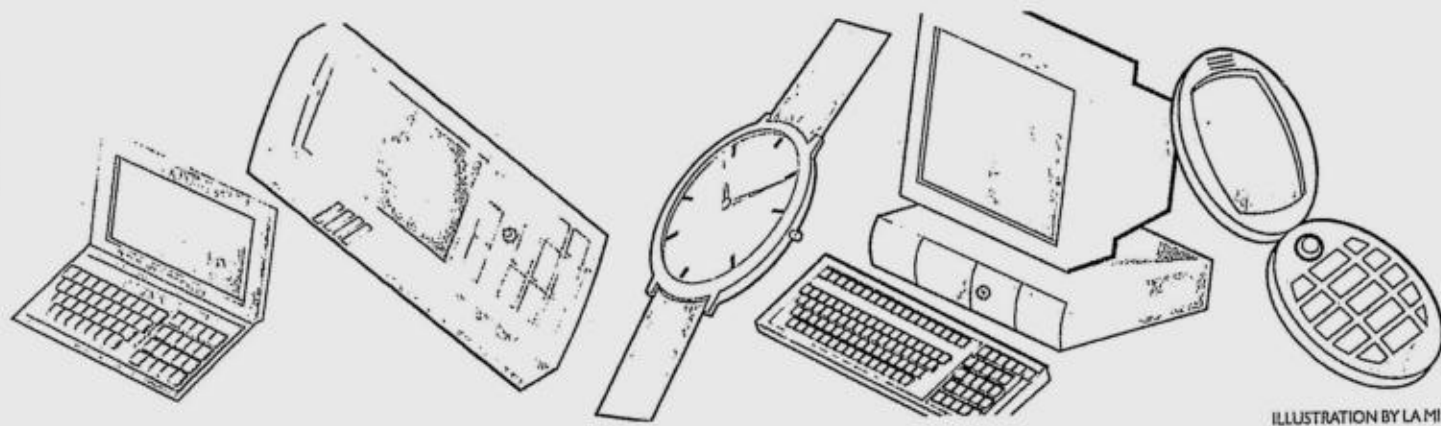


ILLUSTRATION BY LA MISTADES

Healthful new products, inventions

TECHNOLOGY IS RAPIDLY EVOLVING and new health-friendly products are just as quickly made.

Here are new and welcome developments that may help you along your journey to wellness.

Teslar-Anti-Electronic Pollution

The human body is composed of 75 percent water and 25 percent matter just as ¾ of our planet is covered with water. The human body is so in sync with its home, planet Earth.

But with the introduction of electronic devices (computers, cell phones, high-tension wires, household equipment like microwaves, cars), studies have shown that the body is bombarded with high levels of electro-magnetic energy or electro-magnetic frequencies (EMF), electronic pollution that poses health risks.

Honka Harezi, a woman whose passion was studying the effect of electronic pollution on the body, teamed up with Dr. Anduja Puharich, an expert in this technology. They designed a tiny copper chip they called Teslar, after Nikola Tesla, an inventor whose research was the basis for their study.

The chip is placed inside a wristwatch to cancel out EMF. It creates a 7-9 hertz of electro-magnetic field similar to the Earth's natural frequency, in an attempt to put people back in perfect rhythm with the Earth.

The result is a new health watch, the Philip Stein Teslar. It has gotten actual testimonials on its curative and soothing effects on the wearer—from reduction or elimination of pain and tension headaches to disappearance of unexplained discomfort and irritability/mood swings.

The watch is the current craze among the health conscious, attracting the likes of Oprah, Madonna. Available only at Lucerne (tel. 8178655).

Healthy oil

The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends that average intake of fat should

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino



be 30 percent of your total caloric intake. Note: Not just any fat but balanced fat, such as 30 percent saturated (animal, coconut palm oil), 33 percent polyunsaturated (soy, corn), 37 percent monounsaturated (sunflower seeds, olive, canola).

All oils have a smoke point, that level of heat when they begin to smoke (when fatty acids start breaking down). Generally, the higher the smoke point, the better. Smoke point is the level when oil turns from healthy to unhealthy.

A study by AHA of different oils—rice bran, olive, canola, peanut, soybean, grape seed—rice bran oil (RBO) was found to have the highest smoke point and the most even distribution of fats. A close second was peanut oil. (Note: Coco oil was not in the study, although Philippine studies indicated coconut oil ranked high alongside rice bran oil.) Moreover, just two tablespoons a day of RBO may reduce harmful cholesterol levels by up to 30 percent (a close second is safflower oil).

RBO contains a unique extract called Gamma Oryzanol that can decrease body fat, increase body mass and increase excretion of cholesterol. A favorite of health enthusiast Delifresh, it is great on salads and for baking and cooking. The organic deli/resto in Shangri-La Mall (car park side) uses RBO liberally.

Call Qzine Marketing Corp. (tel. 6555841 or 6562775) Best Field Rice Bran Oil. Global Café in Greenbelt 3 will also use this product soon.

Carb snack

The body needs carbohydrates. Without

carbs, your brain and central nervous system are deprived of glucose, the end result of digesting starches and sugars. Protein, required for tissue building, is wasted in the absence of carbs.

But if you eat too much carbs, more than you can burn, you will gain weight. The downfall of most weight-watchers is snacking on cakes and candies.

Now you can snack on the first multigrain cracker made of whole wheat flour, wheat bran and sesame seeds. It is made by Blue Skies.

Probiotic mix

Do you know that antibiotics destroy both good and bad bacteria in your body? They cannot distinguish between friend or foe.

When good bacteria are destroyed, there is an imbalance of fungi. Thus, you develop yeast problems and infections and your immune system is down.

Friendly bacteria aid in digestion, strengthen the immune system, help keep hormone levels normal and strengthen the gastrointestinal tract against the H-phylori bacteria that cause ulcers. They control urinary tract and vaginal yeast infections.

Increase good bacteria with more fiber, yogurt or a daily supplement of probiotics. Some friendly bacteria are acidophilus and bifidus but a combination of seven lacto and bifido strains is the most effective and potent in promoting better health. The multistrain probiotic Protexin made in the United Kingdom has this combination. Call Probiotech Health Products (tel. 8079288, 0922-8882600).

PS: Your choices affect your life. And when you choose a more healthy life, there is no thinking twice about it. If you love yourself, you will adopt a healthier lifestyle—beginning today. So affirm with me: "I love myself. I will become healthier today."

Love and light!

Text CQ to 2966 for Smart for beauty and wellness inquiries.

Medical school marks 50th year

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST RAMON Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center-College of Medicine celebrates its Golden Anniversary this year with a series of activities highlighting the achievements of one of the country's premier medical schools.

This month it is holding the exhibit "UERM-MMMC Alumni, Faculty and Students in Arts & Culture." This will be followed on April 10 by the International Scientific Session on Cardiovascular Diseases.

The UERM-MMMC College of Medicine will hold its graduation April 23 at the Philippine International Convention Center.

In May, a series of workshops will be held for UERM-MMMC faculty.

The Golden Jubilee Week will begin with Opening Exercises and Recognition Day on June 7. A Students' Fair will be held the next day. Foundation Day on June 9 will include a Thanksgiving Mass, a variety show and the unveiling of the 50th jubilee marker.

A gala dinner and Recognition Night will be on June 10.

The Golden Jubilee Alumni Homecoming will be held in December.

The series of jubilee events started with a convocation in January with Sen. Ramon B. Magsaysay Jr. as guest. A medical mission and the Postgraduate Conference on Medical Management Update and a fellowship night were held in February.

Call 0917-8945468 and 7160025.



UST HOSPITAL EMBRACES ITS NEW LEVEL OF INDEPENDENCE

THE UST HOSPITAL
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60 YEARS
READY FOR THE FUTURE

A time for change

By Marlet D. Salazar

Since the change in management, our flagship projects concentrated on putting up institutes which are composed of multidiscipline or multi-specialty services

FOLLOWING ITS NEWLY found independence, The University of Santo Tomas Hospital (USTH) underwent a complete transformation to become the country's premier center of excellence in healthcare.

The development phase of a new hospital complex, expansion of doctors' offices, construction of a nursing tower, and acquisition of new equipment, was set in June 2005 and is expected to finish in 2008. New and state-of-the-art facilities will define the kind of health service the hospital is committed to give.

Included in the five-year plan set by the new administration is the establishing of the hospital's four cornerstones that shall stamp the role and position of USTH in the medical field. The Benavides Cancer Institute which broke ground last year is the newest addition to the existing institutes: Cardiovascular, Endocrine and Metabolic, and the Organ Transplant Institutes. The hospital will soon set up its own Eye Institute.

The concept of an institute is pursuing care, treatment, and prevention of a specific illness. The services range from total to comprehensive care or from prevention to treatment.

The rapid development resulted in a more dynamic institution in healthcare committed to give the most excellent medical services in the region.

"The role of the hospital since its foundation is two-fold," said Canon Alfonso, MD, president and chief executive officer of the University of Santo Tomas Hospital. "One is to provide charity services, and two, to educate and train in various fields both in medicine and its allied services."

Optimum care

The decision to make the change stemmed from the desire of the in-

stitution to adapt and meet the evolving demands of modern healthcare, globally.

"The current administration and the board of trustees were convinced that the hospital, in order to survive and remain relevant in modern times, must engage itself in the current and future challenges of healthcare," he said.

The hospital identified its own areas of specialization in disease management. "Since the change in management, we concentrated on putting up institutes composed of multidiscipline or multi-specialty services," said Dr. Alfonso.

The institutes are also venues for conducting cutting edge of therapy.

"(The third function which is) training is meant for the future because we are actually passing down technology, skills, and knowledge," Dr. Alfonso said.

Without these three components, there will be no assurance that the institution will continue. An institute is an assurance that the best possible service will be made available.

The direction to develop these institutes was prompted by the incidence of the so-called lifestyle diseases. Heart diseases and diseases of the vascular system are the country's No.1 killers, followed by cancer which is the second most common non-infectious and non-traumatic cause of death. Obesity is increasingly becoming a major problem not only of adults but of kids as well. It is linked with the rapid change in lifestyle worldwide that somehow promotes inactivity and choice of food.

Unified services

To keep up with global standards in the delivery of services, USTH needed to upgrade its facilities especially in modern technology. At the time the new management took over, the hospital had already upgraded 52 percent of its equipment. In a span of less than two years, equipment had been updated 95 percent. In the first year, the hospital implemented eight major changes, and it is nearing 14 changes when it comes to infrastructure.

Dr. Alfonso and the new team also saw the need in improving the two buildings that comprise the University of Santo Tomas Hospital: the Private and Clinical Divisions.

"We feel that there should only be one standard of service for all sectors of society," he said.

At present USTH maintains 352 private beds subsidizing the Clinical Division's 460. The Private Division is the one sustaining the charity arm of the hospital. This is where the revenues come from.

The vision of the new USTH includes a soon-to-rise 17-storey Medical Arts Tower consisting of 250 rooms to serve as doctors' offices accommodating a maximum four time-sharing physicians each. Also envisioned to tower the other structures along España and A.H. Lacson streets in Manila is the 22-storey Nursing Tower with international standard facilities with 402 beds. Another is the 7-storey podium centrally located between the Medical Arts Tower and the Nursing Tower which will serve as common functional areas and will comprise Emergency Room, Diagnostic Section, DR-Nursery complex, ICU, Pharmacy and Central Supply areas.

Medical Tourism

One of USTH's strongest points aside from its pioneering breakthroughs in the medical field is its people.

"Our experts are all over," Dr. Alfonso said.

The mass exodus of medical practitioners did not hinder the institu-

tion from its forward-looking ideals. Recent developments and the addition of staff may somewhat be a statement of defiance over the growing trend of brain drain.

"We have, in fact, a 47 percent increase in medical staff," said Dr. Alfonso.

The hospital now has over 600 medical staff, from 325 in 2004. By 2010 there should be 1,000 doctors serving with their own dedicated housing and commercial spaces for value added services. The hospital also employs over 1,600 people.

The management is relentlessly focused on expanding and upgrading human resources and developing future leaders in the process. The doctors are now measured according to their personal and professional contributions.

Long before the term medical tourism was coined, USTH has already been admitting patients from other countries mostly from Micronesia, this is according to Dr. Alfonso.

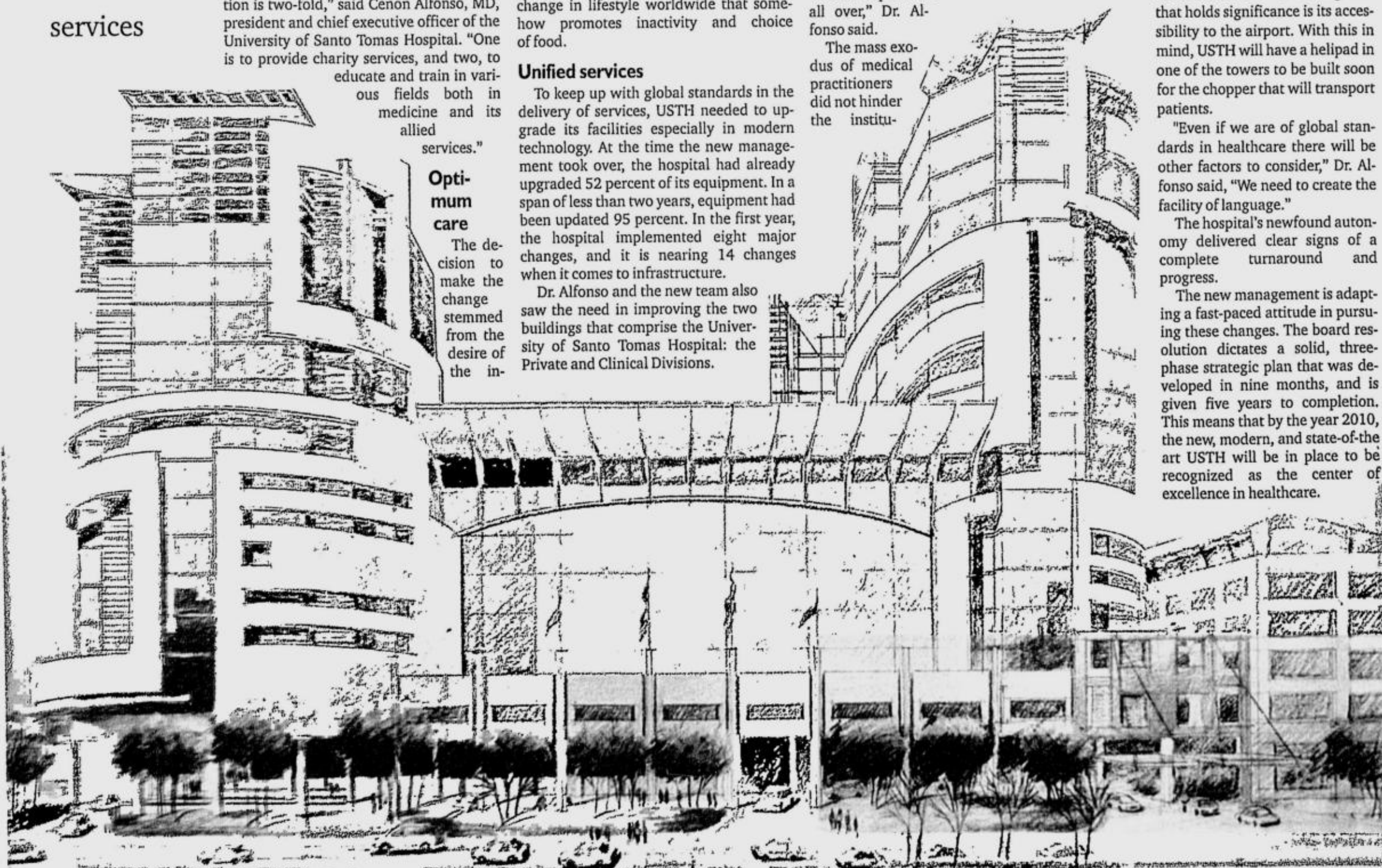
"Once we reach global standards, we will start welcoming more international patients," he said.

The hospital desires these changes before going into full operations with medical tourism. One of the logistics that holds significance is its accessibility to the airport. With this in mind, USTH will have a helipad in one of the towers to be built soon for the chopper that will transport patients.

"Even if we are of global standards in healthcare there will be other factors to consider," Dr. Alfonso said, "We need to create the facility of language."

The hospital's newfound autonomy delivered clear signs of a complete turnaround and progress.

The new management is adapting a fast-paced attitude in pursuing these changes. The board resolution dictates a solid, three-phase strategic plan that was developed in nine months, and is given five years to completion. This means that by the year 2010, the new, modern, and state-of-the-art USTH will be in place to be recognized as the center of excellence in healthcare.



Congratulations!!! University of Sto. Tomas Hospital

on your **60th** *Foundation Anniversary*



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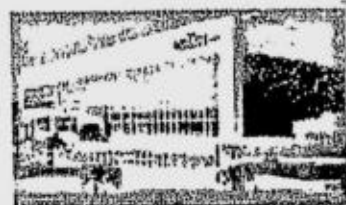
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Celebrating USTH 60th Foundation Day

IN CELEBRATION OF THE 60TH Foundation Day, the University of Santo Tomas Hospital held simultaneous activities which began as early as Feb. 7. These include community social services like surgical missions, free cataract screening, free refraction, deworming of children, etc.

A team of cardiologists conducted angioplasty for some indigent patients for its "Save a Heart Medical Mission". In addition, several departments held blessings and inauguration of their facilities. The hospital will also celebrate its family day for all employees today



UST Class '69 who are mostly based in the United States volunteer each year for the hospital's in-house surgical missions.



FREE blood typing



FREE chest X-ray ongoing



CONFERENCE on Pacemakers



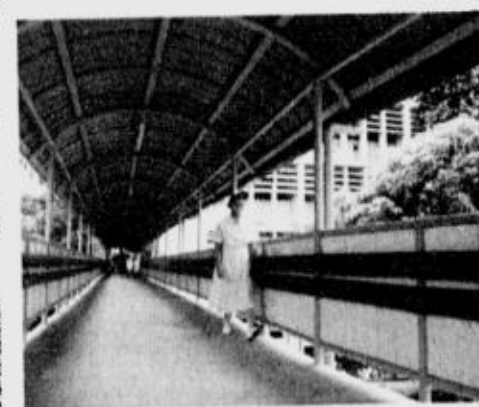
Doctors conduct a free angiography during the Save-a-Heart 3 program.



FREE cataract screening is available for the whole month of March.



THE NEW Coffee Corner



THE BLESSING of the footbridge



Cochlear implants for the hearing-impaired

Since its introduction in the 1980s, cochlear implantation has been improving lives of patients with severe to profound hearing losses. Hearing aids are no longer of help because of the severity of the handicap. Patients who have benefited from the implant are mostly children. A cochlear implant is a small, complex electronic device that provides a sense of sound to one who is severely deaf. This imprint is placed under the

skin behind the ear. It has four basic parts: microphone to pick up sound from the environment, speech processor which selects and arranges sounds picked up by the microphone, transmitter and stimulator which receive signals from the speech processor and convert them into electric impulses, and electrodes which collect the impulses from the stimulator and send them to the brain. The implant does not restore or create normal hearing though—under the appropriate conditions, it can give a

deaf person useful auditory understanding of the environment and help him to understand speech. The primary benefits of a cochlear implant are as an aid in lip reading, perception of environment sounds, and as an aid in monitoring the volume of one's own voice. Although this does not guarantee "complete treatment," the patient can still enjoy and experience a more normal life.

Ensuring excellent healthcare for the future

THE NOW POPULARLY called "lifestyle diseases" have become increasingly alarming. The number of patients escalates every day. The intervention of

medical breakthroughs as well as of science and technology make these killer diseases preventable.

The University of Santo Tomas Hospital provides a venue for medical professionals to combat these dis-

eases. The hospital's institutes will become the benchmark of first-class and quality healthcare in the region.

The comprehensive care of patients must begin with

prevention. This means that information must be available

Oncologists, cardiologists, and doctors of various specializations will have to train to even further their expertise. The USTH institutes are the perfect training center for

them with all the equipment and facilities available.

The best way to fight these diseases is to conduct research and be at the forefront of cutting edge technology.



THE BENAVIDES CANCER INSTITUTE

Cancer is the second most common non-infectious and non-traumatic cause of deaths worldwide. Recent reports citing the World Health Organization show that lung cancer is the world's most diagnosed disease, with 1.35 million cases [detected] annually. The most common cancer among women is breast cancer. And there are other new cancers that afflict the population.

Launched last year, The Benavides Cancer Institute is meant to become a major player in battling cancer. It will have world-class facilities and expertise.

The institute will employ a multi-modal or multi-equipment approach, and multi-disciplinary treatment, fielding the latest advances in cancer therapy.

To improve overall survival and a better quality of life for the patient, the institute shall excel in surgery, and will have systemic control using chemotherapy; and loco-regional-

control using radiotherapy alone or in combination.

Combined with the hospital's renowned surgical and medical oncologists, The Benavides Cancer Institute is going to be among the finest in the Asian region.

THE CARDIOVASCULAR INSTITUTE

People need to know that there is not just one type of heart disease. It can range from abnormal heart rhythms to the most common coronary heart disease. Heart diseases and diseases of the vascular system are the leading causes of death in the world.

The UST Hospital Cardiovascular Institute is committed to address this, with leading-edge prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation. Its mission is to reduce the devastating effects of cardiovascular disease through innovative and progressive programs in improved individualized patient care, research and education.

The institute will deploy state-of-the-art, world-class non-invasive and invasive diagnostic and therapeutic cardiovascular technologies, manned by a team of highly competent and compassionate cardiovascular and allied specialists.



THE ENDOCRINE AND METABOLIC INSTITUTE

The incidence of obesity has become a global problem along with other diseases like diabetes, hyperthyroidism, hypothyroidism, growth hormone problems among children, and weight and metabolic problems.

The UST Hospital's Endocrine and Metabolic Institute was organized and structured to serve patients in diagnosis, education, and information on correct nutrition and exercise, as well as surgical intervention and treatments.

The institute is a one-stop, comprehensive unit where all endocrine and metabolic patients are cared for by these units:

Saint Thomas Diabetic Clinic. This unit provides diabetes education and management of patient diets, exercise programs, and insulin injections.

Endocrine Diseases Clinic. Dynamic testing, thyroid and endocrine education for non-specialist physicians, laymen, rotating interns, and residents are done here.

Metabolic Clinic. It develops diet programs for afflicted in-patients and out-patients, with unique and specialized adult and pediatric weight management regimes.

Bariatric Surgery Clinic. Critically obese patients, with all the attendant health problems, are treated with the institute's breakthrough bariatric surgery procedure. It gives them a new chance to start healthy lives and lead a healthier lifestyle.

THE TRANSPLANT INSTITUTE

The country's first kidney transplant was

successfully performed at The UST Hospital in 1969. This milestone led to other significant achievements that marked the USTH as the premier hospital in the country.

The Artificial Kidney Unit pioneered renal replacement therapy (RRT) in the Philippines and the UST Transplant Foundation provides assistance for indigent patients undergoing kidney transplantation.

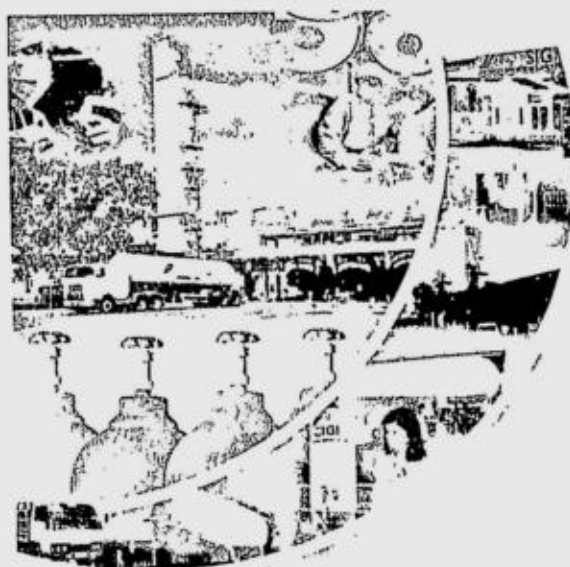


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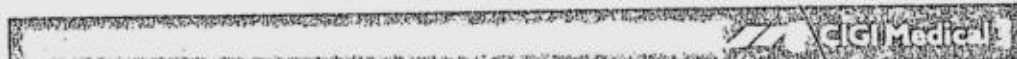
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Music nourishes her soul.
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Adele Joaquin-Kalwas
cares for her elderly mother



Adele and her mother are both musicians. Adele plays the flute while her mom, Encarnacion, who's almost in her 90's, can still play the piano. Given her mom's age, Adele knows that good nutrition is even more important for her strength.

Thankfully there's NUTREN Optimum. A delicious meal replacement in Vanilla and now in Chocolate flavor. A breakthrough from the Nestlé Research Center in Switzerland and made from the finest chocolate, the taste of NUTREN Optimum Chocolate is preferred by consumers over its competition in a recently conducted consumer test. NUTREN contains whey, plus all of the essential nutrients, vitamins and minerals in every glass.

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- Help boost the immune system, thereby helping reduce the risk of infection.²

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¹ Walzem, R.L., D.J. DiBard, and J.B. Gorman. Clin. Nutr. Food & Sci. Nutr. 42:253, 2002. ² Molitor A. Cancer Res 1994;54(5):1009-1976.

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Vice President & COORolando E. Cabatu, MD
Medical DirectorMateo R. Bagsic, MD
Administrative DirectorEdgardo T. Orlina, MD
Ancillary Services DirectorNoemi D. Menchavez
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Nursing DirectorAgustina C. Aguilar, OP
Pastoral Care Services

Special care for patients at the Special Service Units

THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS HOSPITAL LONG before the major turnaround has been in the forefront of giving excellent service for the people. Its education, training, and research have always been guided by Catholic faith. The people have always served with enthusiasm, and compassion. Proof of this commitment is giving specialized and expert services with its "Special Service Units."

The Eye Center

The Eye Center's Mission is to protect and prolong vision. It conducts research to prevent and treat eye diseases, reduce visual impairment, and blindness. It aims to improve the quality of life of the patients.

Hearing and Dizziness Center

It is the only hearing center in the country fully accredited by international bodies like Hearing International, International Society of Audiology, and the International Federation of Otolaryngological Societies. The center specializes in pediatric hearing testing and optimal hearing aid fitting.

Dermatology Center

The skin is the biggest organ of the body and it gets exposed to so much damage, natural, and man-made. The USTH Dermatology Center's services include: phototherapy, multi-light IPL system, wound management, and iontophoresis. It is much preferred to consult a dedicated skin center of any hospital that specializes in the treatment of diseases of the skin, hair, and nails.

Endoscopy Unit

This unit performs all forms of diagnostic and therapeutic gastrointestinal and biliary procedures as practiced in the best medical facilities throughout the world. Its expertise is evident in its

many firsts and pioneering endeavors: electro hydraulic lithotripsy, double probe 24-hour pH monitoring, cyanoacrylate glue, CCTV live international therapeutic endoscopy workshops and EUS with FNA technology.

Acute Stroke Unit

Effective management of strokes starts at the emergency unit with quick and accurate diagnosis, followed by immediate medical care. Tests help locate blockages in major arteries of the brain, narrowing of blood vessels and blood clots such as ultrasound testing, CT scans, and MRI.

High Risk Unit

High Risk patients are any of the following: women with medical problems before pregnancy, women with medical problems during pregnancy, women with problems related to pregnancy. Some medical problems associated with high-risk pregnancies: pre-term labor, diabetes, high blood pressure, low

birth weight and twins/ triplets /multiple babies.

Center for Urological Services

It is the center that manages disorders of the male and female urinary tract, i.e. bladder, ureter, kidney, and urethra, and the male reproductive system. The center also offers Lithotripsy, the technology of pulverizing of kidney, ureter and urinary bladder stones using high intensity shockwaves.

Joint and Bone Center

The center is engaged in community service with active links to organizations such as the Arthritis Care and Research Foundation of the Philippines, Lupus Foundation of the Philippines, and Osteoporosis Society of the Philippines foundation. It is also where training and development in Rheumatology take place. Research is conducted in ethically approved projects and recognized publications.

St. Thomas Diabetes Center

The center provides a comprehensive approach to patient education in the prevention of acute and chronic complications of diabetes, through its Diabetes Education Team. It aims for excellence and relevance through the implementation of effective programs in Diabetes Education to all its patients with diabetes at the time of diagnosis and at regular intervals throughout life as may be needed.

Center for Kidney Diseases (CKD)

Its purpose is to provide the most effective and efficient healthcare possible to meet physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual needs of patients undergoing hemodialysis. The center has 17 hemodialysis stations and services 35 to 40 patients a day, six days a week.

Short Stay Oncology Unit (Pediatric)

The unit serves as an ambulatory clinic for children with hematologic and oncologic diseases, providing cost-effective alternative healthcare delivery systems and diagnostic and therapeutic interventions that usually do not require hospitalization. It provides ambulatory care, with facilities for both diagnostic procedures and therapeutic intervention, minimizing hospital confinement.

Catheterization Laboratory

Services of this unit are directed towards the provision of compassionate, diagnostic, and therapeutic procedures for coronary artery disease, heart muscle function, heart valve and heart conduction dysfunctions, cerebral, renal and other vascular diseases among pediatric, adult and geriatric patients with cardiac and vascular ailments during cardiovascular catheterization and related procedures.

Center for Respiratory Medicine

Our mission is to breathe life into pulmonary research, service, and training. Its services include ventilator management, respiratory care, pulmonary function laboratory, interventional pulmonology, pulmonary rehabilitation unit. We offer a vast array of diagnostic and therapeutic services that are among the most complete and comprehensive in the country.

Heart Station and Echo Laboratory

There are two units for the Heart Station and Echo Laboratory: one in the Private Division and one in the Clinical Division adjacent to the medical wards. Its services include: exercise stress test and 24-hour holter monitoring, ECG recordings vectorcardiography, pacemaker analysis, head up tilt test, and 24-hour BP monitoring.

Chemotherapy Unit

The unit provides the highest possible quality medical care for ambulatory patients consistent with up-to-date, evidence-based treatment in the specialties of Medical Oncology and Clinical Hematology. A team of competent, knowledgeable and compassionate medical professionals performs efficient, timely minor diagnostic and therapeutic procedures at reasonable rates.

Neuromuscular Unit

Manned by Neurologists and Psychiatrists, this is a unit where nerve and muscle are studied electrophysiologically (EMG, NCV) as well as histologically. Frozen sections, fixed and paraffin embedded tissues are processed histologically and histochemically. Nerves are morphometrically analyzed.

Pain Management Unit

The unit was organized with a mission to alleviate suffering from acute and chronic pain. Acute pains are pains of recent onset and limited duration. Chronic pain syndrome includes: cancer pains, myofascial pains, and dysfunctions, complex regional pain syndromes, back pain syndromes including sciatica and post back surgery pain, post herpetic neuralgia, and craniofacial neuralgias.

Orthopedic Care Center

Expertise in the diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, research, training, and education for the prevention of injuries and diseases of the body's musculoskeletal system: bones, joints, cartilage, ligaments, tendons, muscles, and nerves. The unit provides orthopedic services for joint replacements, spinal surgery, arthroscopic procedures, limb surgery, hand surgery, sports medicine, physical medicine and rehabilitation.

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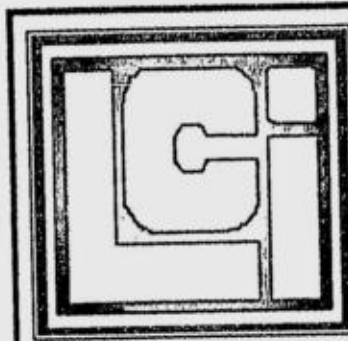
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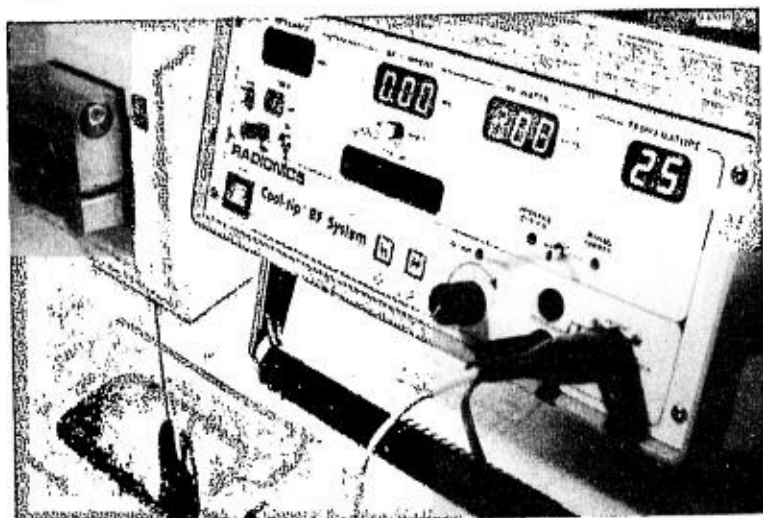
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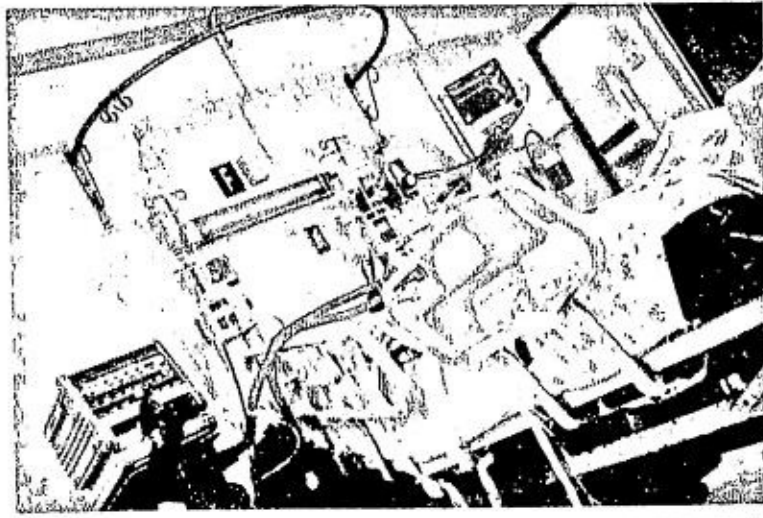
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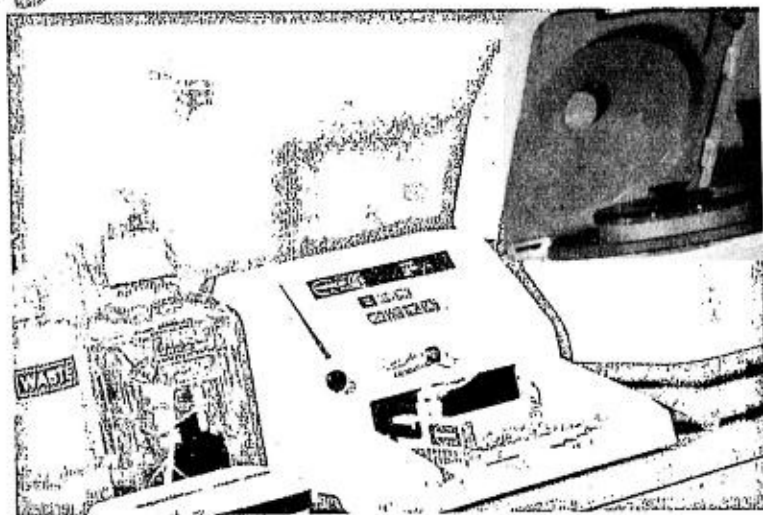
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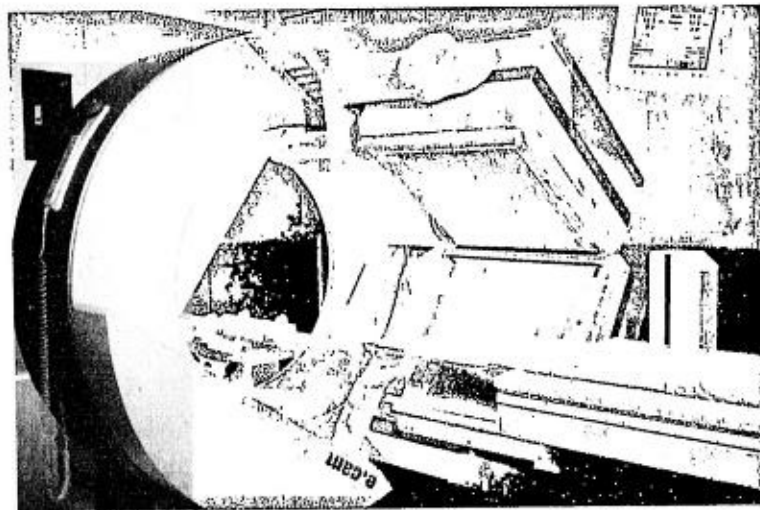
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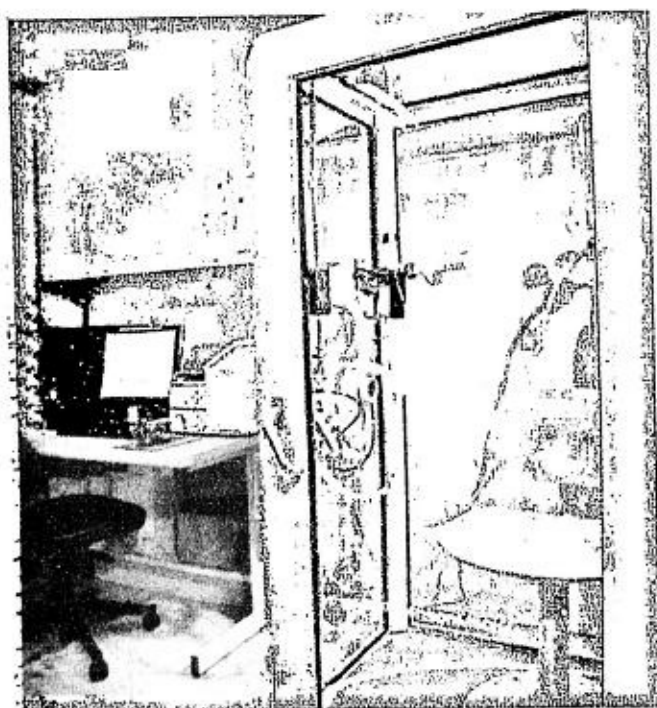
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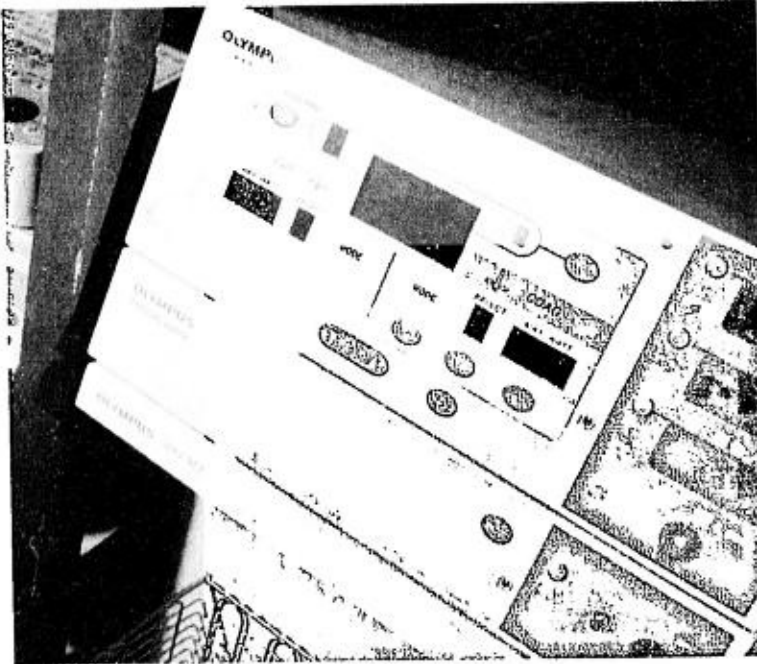
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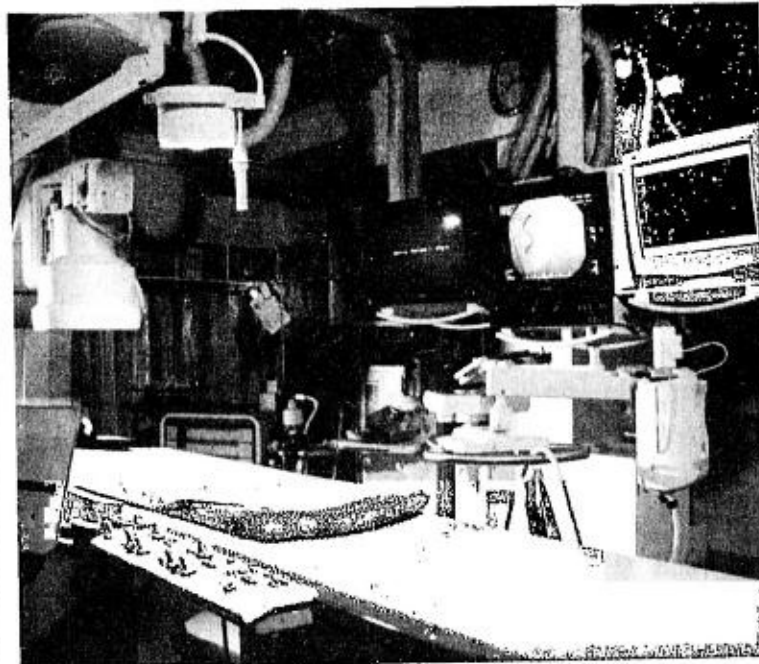
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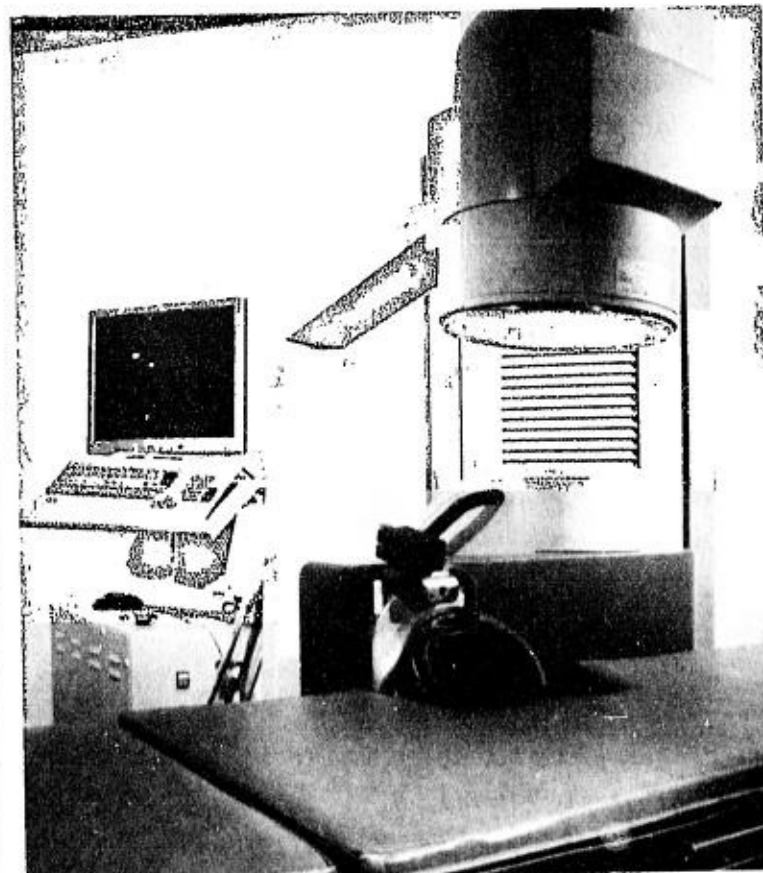


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Tracing the legacy

THE OFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE present Santo Tomas University Hospital is traced to the formal opening of its charity unit on Feb. 15, 1945. But the essence, objective, and spirit of the institution as a training hospital for the university's medical students, as well as its founder's yearning to extend medical help to millions of Filipinos, can claim a history of four centuries.

Originally, the hospital was known as San Juan de Dios Hospital located in Intramuros, Manila. It was founded in 1577 by Fray Juan Clemente, a Franciscan Friar. It was, and still is, built as a teaching and training institution. The growing need for more doctors at that time made the initiative more imperative.

Amidst the challenges it faced in-between two wars, the hospital rose every time. From the Japanese occupation to fires that razed the buildings, it always found a reason to build and operate again.

After the Liberation of Manila in February 1945, Intramuros was totally destroyed, and all the

structures, including the University and its facilities, lay in ruins. In the aftermath of the war, the University transferred its location to España, Manila.

The university purchased hospital equipment, supply, and laboratory apparatus from the US Army General Hospital and the General Army Laboratories for P350,000.

On March 7, 1946, the UST Pay Hospital (Private Division) opened and was inaugurated together with the charity hospital. The very first pay hospital admission was a delivery case of a baby girl.

The first medical director of the hospital was Dr. Nicanor Jacinto, who was concurrently professor

and chair of the Department of Surgery from 1937 to 1961. The first administrator was Dr. Ernesto Medina-Cue who was a concurrent professor of clinical pathology and chief of laboratories. Fr. Francisco del Rio, OP, served as the first Inspector-General.

In 1946, the public dispensary of the hospital was established. Its first director was Dr. Castor Surla. On July 13, 1951, the dispensary was reorganized as the Out-Patient Department, with Dr. Francisco Roman as its head.

The Institute of Neuropsychia-

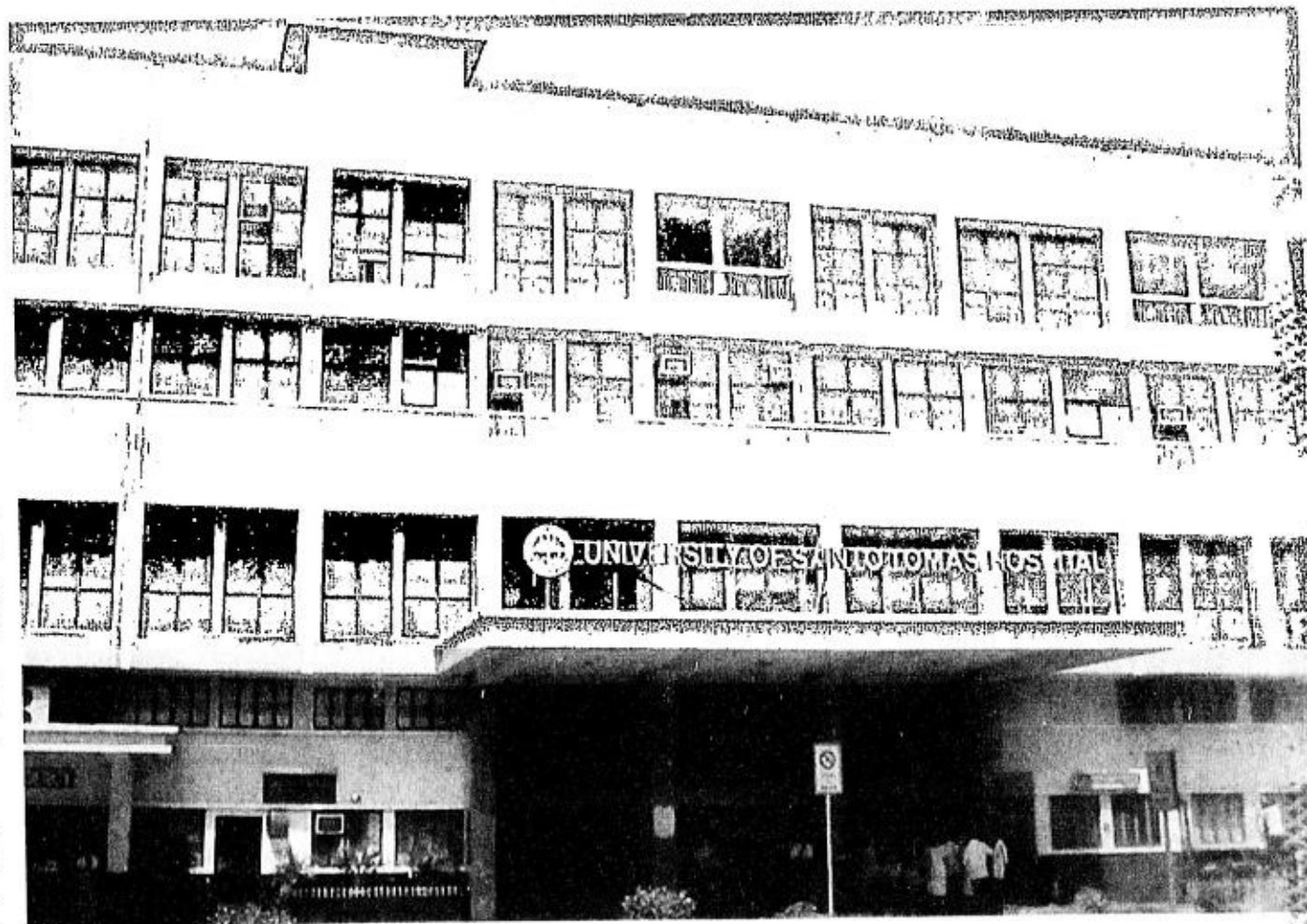
try was established in 1950. It was the first private institution of its kind in the country. The first two resident physicians of the institute were Dr. Gilberto Gamez and Dr. Henry Cube.

The first hospital morgue was constructed and inaugurated in 1958, and later demolished to give way to the construction of the present University of Santo Tomas Hospital Clinical Division.

The USTH quadrangle was completed in 1959. The charity and private services became con-

solidated into this building with the charity wards occupying the first floor. The whole charity ward was transferred and eventually renamed the STUH Clinical Division when it was completed in 1965 and formally inaugurated on March 6, 1966.

Today, the administration of the hospital has changed hands and is currently undergoing major changes, still upholding the ideals and values of compassionate healthcare as espoused by Catholic teachings and morals.



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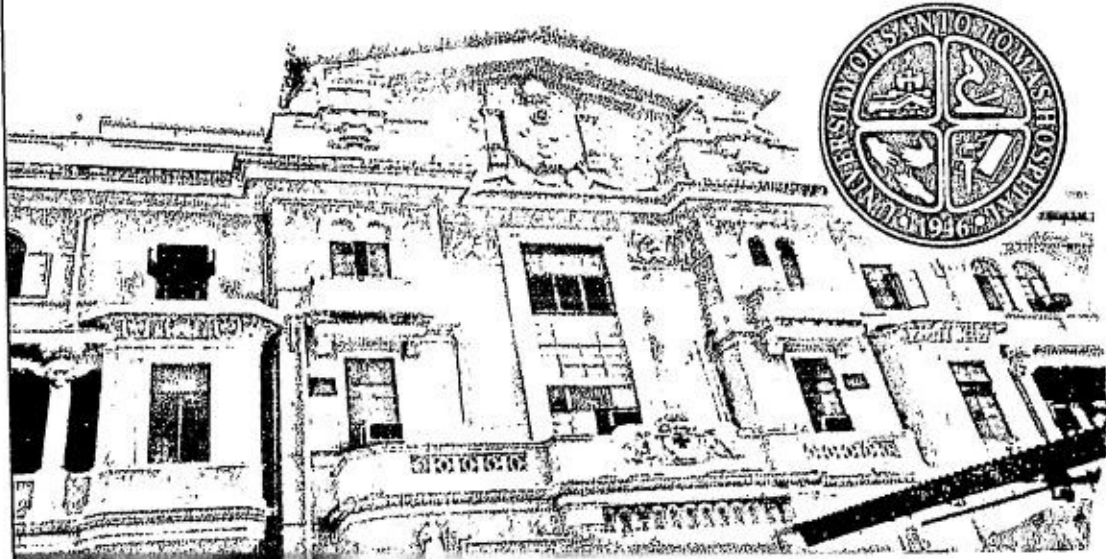
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We take great pride in their professional success, because they now serve excellently in other hospitals.

Of course, The UST Hospital is the home of these fine doctors. And this great tradition of excellence continues to this day.



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